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THE

YOUNG LADY'S BOOK;

OR,

Principles of Female Education.

BY

WILLIAM HOSMER,

EDITOR OF THE NORTHERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

AUBURN AND BUFFALO:
MILLER, ORTON & MULLIGAN.

1855.





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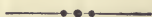
PREFACE.

THE following pages require little explanation by way of preface. They owe their existence to a deep conviction that the present system of female education is essentially defective. As a friend to human improvement, the author could do no less than contribute to the best of his ability to remove the evil. The aim has been to produce a work which, by embodying the ethics of the New Testament, and the progressive spirit of the nineteenth century, should meet the demands of public opinion and relieve the wants of society. How far the effort will prove successful, must be left for time to determine; but the writer, conscious of having performed a duty, will cheerfully abide the result whatever it may be. Having expressed himself fearlessly, he is not disposed to weaken the force of truth by apologies.

PREFACE.

It ought, perhaps, further to be stated, that so much of the title-page as is contained in these words, —“The Young Lady’s Book”—is not to be understood in any restricted sense. The work is designed for the married as well as the unmarried, and will, it is hoped, be found useful to readers of all classes.

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CHAPTER I.

Woman as a Human Being.

IF woman has the responsibilities of human nature, she certainly ought to have its advantages also; the privileges should go with the duties, the means with the obligation to use them. Probably there are few who will dispute so reasonable a position as this, and yet there are many who do not feel its force, or are reluctant to admit its consequences. The almost universal impression is, that as the station in society and the physical constitution of women are, in some respects, subordinate and inferior to that of men, their education should be of a corresponding character. That is, a subordinate education for a subordinate station, and slender acquirements for a slender constitution! Doubtless this is something better than the absolute servitude and degrada-

tion of a darker age. A woman with some education will be likely to rise above the condition of an abject menial, but without an equal education, she can never rise to an equal standing with the other sex.

It is useless to argue the question of comparative ability for scientific acquisitions, until we have settled the character of the claims which are imposed upon women. The slight grounds on which their right to participate in the best advantages of education, has been set aside, show that prejudice rather than reason has influenced the decision. Let the claims of women be judged by the same rules that those of men are; let both branches of the human race receive according to their actual wants, and there can no injustice be done. We shall point to the general elements of our nature as the only competent guide to a true standard of female education. And in none of these elements is the female less concerned, or can she perform her duties with less assistance.

The first and greatest concern of all mankind is religion or morals. In the high duties

which we owe to God as Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, no one will deny that woman is interested ; she must worship God, and to worship him she must know him. She must serve him, and this service demands a knowledge of his law. It will require just as much knowledge for her to perform these duties as it would if she belonged to the male part of our species. A being that must be religious, a being whose days should be spent in intelligent piety, and whose eternity will be devotional, cannot be too well instructed. Her wants as a religious being are as great as the wants of human nature can be. Morality is not to be less refined or less exclusive with women than with men. Indeed, society seems to require even a higher standard of them, and this of itself presupposes that they are to have a proportionately better knowledge of ethics. Now, if females have a religious and moral nature to provide for—if, with the rest of humanity, they stand related to God as probationers for eternity, and if to them, as to others, knowledge is power, it is sufficiently clear that they have an equal claim to education. Here

we see not only the degree, but the kind of education which is requisite. As human beings, women should have such knowledge as will fit them for immortality. They are not to be restricted, without the same imminent hazard as others—that of being “*alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.*” It is the necessity for this cultivation that places female education on higher ground; it is the human nature which they possess that gives them a christian destiny and christian immunities. Having as great duties to perform and as great interests at stake as others, there can be no reason why they should not have as great advantages.

The intellectual nature of woman calls for its full share of cultivation. Hers must be an intellectual part. She will have through life the same occasion for mental vigor as if she had been born to other duties. The statesman and the warrior have not more need of knowledge than the mother of a family. She must live among the intelligent, and contribute to their happiness; she must share in all the vicissitudes of life, and meet all its dangers with

fortitude, or she cannot perform her mission as woman. It is hers to live, and it is hers to die; and in what greater events can mankind be concerned? Both the ills of life and the terrors of death she has to endure, with only such supports as are common to the race; and if it would be cruel to deny to man the solace of knowledge, it is even more cruel to withhold it from woman. But admitting—what can never be admitted—that the earthly career of woman does not demand the most extensive cultivation of her mind, the identity of her situation with that of man, in the world to come, proves conclusively that her education should be similar in this life. If the two sexes are to have one common employment in eternity, then the great essentials of their education should be identical, as a preparation for that eternity.

Physical nature in women requires to be cultivated for the very same reason that it does in men. They cannot live or enjoy health regardless of physical laws, and it is utterly absurd to suppose that their knowledge of these laws can safely be restricted. So long

as they are equally affected by all physical causes, so long must they have an equal need of that knowledge by which these causes are controlled.

Here is the basis of woman's privileges ; a foundation not laid by Christianity, but by the Creator, and only restored by Christianity as an exposition of the works of God. Christianity has corrected an injustice which had grown out of man's ignorance and depravity, and has replaced woman in her original sphere. It has taught man that whatever may be affirmed of the dignity of his nature, the same may also be affirmed of woman. She partakes the same nature, and consequently sustains the same relation to God and to all things of temporal or spiritual importance. This fact is a full answer to all those who would deny to females any of those advantages which they deem essential to the other sex. Her wants are as great as the wants of man, because her responsibilities are the same as his. That her duties in this life are not altogether identical with his, must be admitted ; but this variation

of practical affairs is attended with no diminution of responsibility. The more secluded and domestic life which nature points out to her, must form her character to the same high standard that is demanded of men; as a Christian, she cannot rest in an inferior excellence, because she has no hope of a mitigated judgment.

CHAPTER II.

Woman as a Social Being.

THE social relations of woman are peculiar, and cannot be perverted without the most serious evils. These relations are different, but not inferior ; she cannot have the same position as the other sex, but she must have one equally honorable.

As a social being, she needs to be educated with special reference to that sexual distinction which nature has established. Upon the maintenance of her sexual character untarnished through life, will depend her honor and her happiness ; and that she may have every advantage for so desirable an object, she should be furnished with the most ample instructions on all points tending to her preservation from errors of this kind. To leave her to be regulated by her own instincts and by that measure

of judgment which characterizes the uneducated, might be safe, provided the other sex was also to remain uneducated; but this cannot be in civilized society, and there is no security for female virtue, in such society, but the possession of equal knowledge. The distinction of sex, though not fundamental to human nature in its higher elements, is yet fundamental to society; it enters into the framework of the social constitution, and can never be disregarded without the utter prostration of morals. While a high and refined sense of her position as woman characterizes the female, she is fitted to discharge the duties of life; but the loss of this feeling plunges her into the deepest degradation, and society into the greatest confusion. In order that her person and character may in this respect be inviolate, she ought to be raised by knowledge above the need of appealing to the other sex for such assistance as cannot be rendered without a sacrifice of delicacy. And especially ought she to be able to judge for herself of the bearing of all those things which may arise in the course of life to affect her morals. It is

here that the greatest evils have arisen in female education. The superficial and restricted knowledge which women have possessed on subjects connected with their own peculiar relation to the social system, has too often made them an easy prey to the better informed. Never will females be secure until by an increase of knowledge they are rendered capable of acting, under all circumstances, an independent part.

Again, she ought to know that the state of comparative subordination which falls to her lot by the appointment of nature and the customs of society, is not one of real humiliation, but only of temporary and honorable variety, originating necessarily in the present constitution of human nature. This fact, well understood, will prevent all improper desire to rise above her condition, and all those apings of masculine characteristics which she was never intended to possess, and never can exhibit without destroying the loveliness of her appropriate character. Her station, though different from that of man, is no less important to the social system. With just ideas of her dig-

nity, she can never wish to change the allotments of Providence. Uneasiness and a wish to be what she is not, proclaim how little she understands the wisdom that has made her so important a part of the human family. Ignorance alone is the cause of her discontent. Let her see as clearly as she might the hand of God in the arrangement of the social system, and she cannot fail to be thankful for her part in that system,—burdened though that part be with some peculiar trials.

The next consideration affecting her improvement, is a knowledge of the various duties which grow out of her position in society. Not to be thoroughly trained in these, is to be unqualified for the station she must occupy. As the greater share of domestic management falls to her lot, it would be an almost irreparable misfortune to have her unacquainted with this department. A woman who has only a superficial knowledge of household affairs, and who views all labors of this kind as mere drudgery, beneath the dignity of her character, will be regarded by all discerning men as unworthy of the name of woman. She may be

fitted to parade in a drawing-room, but she is not fitted for the more important scenes of life. Those branches of female education which are commonly deemed ornamental, and for which so much eagerness is manifested by many, have no essential relation to the great events of woman's life ; she is neither a better house keeper, nor a better mother, nor a better member of society, for these accomplishments. Skill in the appropriate duties of her station, and the general excellences of human nature, will always constitute her worth. Superficial accomplishments, and an air of disdain for humbler pursuits, may give her some consequence in certain circles ; yet among better judges such acquisitions will only expose her to deserved contempt.

Such are the outlines of what we conceive to be a true system of education for woman.

1. It should be commensurate with the wants of human nature, both in the higher and in the lower elements of that nature.

2. It should provide for maintaining inviolate her sexual character, which cannot be

overlooked without endangering her morality, and consequently the stability of the social system.

3. It should thoroughly qualify her for the discharge of the appropriate duties of her sphere in life.

In the further elucidation of the principles here laid down, I shall not endeavor to include every topic that might be discussed in connection with female education. There are many things belonging to general education as applicable to one sex as to the other; and these general features of the subject, alike adapted to either sex, and treated at large in most works on education, have been purposely omitted, except where some reference to them was needed to illustrate the matter in hand. It was not my intention to write a volume on education in the abstract, but on the education of woman in particular. This will account for the absence of some things which would have been desirable in a treatise less restricted in its range. Peculiarities alone are discussed. What is common to the sexes has

been left to be gleaned from other sources, as its introduction here would only have increased the size of the volume, without adding materially to its value. It is for this reason that, in treating of the morals of woman, the discussion has been confined entirely to the virtue of chastity. In all other things she needs the same moral excellence as man, and can obtain it in the same manner; but in this she differs from him, and demands at least a different line of conduct, if not a higher degree of virtue.

CHAPTER III.

Moral Education.

SECTION I.—PRINCIPLE.

THAT woman should possess an elevated moral character, is admitted by all, and therefore needs no proof. But there can be no permanent virtue—no real morality, without a fixed moral principle. Policy, expediency, and artifice are quite too low ; they may serve to keep up appearances for the time, but in the end the true character will be revealed, and be revealed, too, amid irredeemable disgrace and ruin. A woman must not only avoid vice, but detest it ; she must abominate it in her heart, or she will manifest it in her life. This is indeed true of all who act a responsible part, and no more true of woman than of man, except as the peculiarities of her nature render it important that she should bear a stainless reputa-

tion. By marriage she becomes a companion for life, and a joint agent in the reproduction of the species. On her fidelity the husband must depend for the transmission of his name to posterity. Without the most uncompromising integrity on the part of his wife, a man might as well be unmarried as married. He has no security but her honor that the children which bear his name are his. Judge, then, how unimpeachable should be a woman's reputation! Not the slightest taint, not even the least obscurity, should ever be allowed to rest upon her conduct. That which is not beyond all question right, is not right enough for a woman to practise. There are nameless variations from strict rectitude which involve the character in suspicion, and constitute a sufficient foundation for that most distressing of all passions—jealousy. Jealousy may sometimes exist without just cause, but in most cases it is produced by conduct at least exceptionable—not exceptionable, perhaps, in a single lady, but certainly exceptionable in a wife. The single woman is under no vows of perpetual fidelity to any one man, and if she falls,

she will bring down to the dust no husband nor children—the disgrace will centre in herself and in her connections. There is, moreover, in the relation of an unmarried female to society, an important reason for more freedom with the other sex. She is always a candidate for marriage, and this presupposes a degree of intercourse with men which can never be tolerated in a married woman. The latter has no matrimonial alliances to form, and can have no occasion for such an intercourse with other men, as might by any possibility give rise to unfavorable imputations; she is sacredly pledged to one, and may not in the slightest degree belong to another; she has no common interest in the other sex—no prospective alliance—no reserved favors to bestow. As her husband forsook all other women for her, so she forsook all other men for him. This mutual forsaking is the basis of the marriage compact, and upon its faithful observance depends the stability of domestic relations, and all the endearing ties of social life.

But while the married woman is thus under obligation to maintain an unequivocal deport-

ment, in view of her conjugal relations, it by no means follows that the unmarried woman can take any considerable degree of liberty. Discretion restricts her to narrow bounds; her intercourse with all men should be calculated to inspire a conviction of her incorruptible integrity;—not, indeed, by an affected display of virtuous pretensions, but by careful attention to the essentials of true morality. The unmarried woman is the future wife, and she ought to possess an honorable character in the estimation of every marriageable man of her acquaintance. This she cannot do without the utmost propriety of conduct. But little can be pardoned to the indiscretion or inexperience of youth, for the unchaste girl will be very likely to make an unchaste wife. The pilfering boy generally proves a dishonest man; unprincipled youth is the too sure precursor of criminal manhood. This is a condition of human nature equally common to both sexes. Besides the necessity arising from the sanctity of conjugal vows, and from the relation of females to the other sex, there is a demand for principle founded on the general obligation of

virtue. It is not simply as male or female that human beings are required to be virtuous. Moral excellence is not based upon sexual distinctions, though it imperatively demands that such distinctions be regarded. The sexual character is modified and controlled by moral principle, but not originated by it. Hence, women need principle, not only to carry them blamelessly through the duties peculiar to their sex, but to give moral excellence to their character. A deficiency of principle in the virtue of chastity, implies a similar deficiency in every other virtue. The virtues are connected and interwoven in such a manner that they cannot be affected singly. They are but the multiplied fruits of the same tree; or, to vary the figure, they are different streams issuing from the same fountain.

It is from woman that our race is to receive its first lessons in virtue; she is destined by nature to culture the infant intellect; her plastic agency has almost exclusive control at the most susceptible period of life. Now the idea that the infant mind and heart, with all their tender susceptibilities, are to be subjected

to the tuition of a being devoid of principle, is too shocking to be endured. Nowhere else ought there to be more uncompromising firmness. A virtue founded upon policy or artifice is no virtue; it utterly misleads. The young mind cannot revolve such a thought without corruption. But how fatally corrupting will such an idea be, when infused into the mind by maternal tenderness!—when the mother's precepts and example teach the pernicious doctrine that virtue is only expediency! It should be fixed upon every mother's tongue, engraven upon her heart, and expressed in her whole life, that virtue is a principle—that right and wrong are eternal opposites. She ought early to inspire a cordial hatred to the one, and as cordial a love for the other. Then may the mother transmit her charge to the world with some hope that temptation will be powerless, and that character will not yield to the seductions of vice.

SECTION II.

PURITY OF DESIRE.

ONE of the most common traits of a lax virtue, is that of evincing desires for improper society. Where the heart is not resolutely set against everything vicious, there will be frequent yearnings for something injudicious, unbecoming, or unlawful; and even where the heart is right, if the judgment is not well informed, this fault is liable to occur. It follows, therefore, that a woman should not only avoid improper society, but also avoid all indications of desire for such society. But mere abstinence is not enough, she ought to detest everything of the kind. Indeed, this will be almost necessarily the effect of banishing such desires. If she retains in ever so concealed a manner the least desire for improper company, she is sure to manifest it in some form; whereas, if the desire were spurned as pernicious, and all mention of such associations deemed an offence to virtue, her character could not be misapprehended, nor her morals endangered.

To the pure there is something positively loathsome in every vicious association—something unendurable in doubtful circumstances. Could an honest man bear to be connected with thieves? Would he not abominate everything that could justly cast suspicion upon him? The same considerations press upon the female in the choice of her society. Every departure from strict propriety compromises her virtue. She may not actually have fallen, but if she can endure to be suspected—if she is careless of rigid self-control, and cannot appreciate the minuter shades of conduct, she must inevitably fall. Her virtue can only run parallel with the absence of temptation. It is not necessary that words should be employed to evince desire. The state of the heart is often better known by the countenance than it could be by any form of words. A lascivious thought, or an improper wish, will gleam from the eye, or reveal itself by some particular act, when, perhaps, it would not have been heeded if communicated in words. There is the sin of position—the vicious expression of time, attitude, and place, against which every pure mind

should unhesitatingly revolt. Some may be less keenly sensible than others to faults of this kind, yet all must see the absolute necessity of avoiding even the appearance of evil. The standard of female virtue should be as high as purity itself. [Nothing less than positive, stainless, unquestionable virtue is worthy of their ambition or consistent with respectability.] The want of this has led to general reproach, and the sex that most needs the protection of invincible morality, has been deemed too fickle to have any character. Pope's remarks in the following lines, though a slander upon the sex wherever their moral powers have been duly cultivated, yet must ever be true where these powers have been neglected:

"Nothing so true as what you once let fall,
'Most women have no characters at all.'
Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair."*

A lady who is sufficiently circumspect in her deportment, will never be liable to injurious imputations, except from the malicious—a

* Epistle to a Lady (Moral Essays, No. 2.)

class whose reproach is the highest praise. Their reviling shows that the prey has escaped them.

It may not always be easy to determine the character of individuals, but if there is an uncompromising hostility to vice, the doubtful will be shunned equally with the openly vile. It is contrary to all rules of prudence to incur needless hazard. The woman who can put herself in positions of exposure, unless compelled by some uncommon necessity, shows at least that her moral sense is neither very acute nor very strong. With her, virtue is a habit, and not a principle, and she sins not, only because she is not tempted. These remarks are intended to apply to all the numberless occasions in the course of life, whether private or public, in which there might be some temptation to improper association. Such occasions cannot be specified beforehand; they are of constant occurrence, and require the presence of an ever watchful virtue to resist them. There should be no communion or sympathy with lax notions and practices; a refined and elevated morality is to govern every act, and

base must be the heart of that man who expects or desires less of woman. His motives cannot be pure, or he would not only concede to her the right to be extremely careful, but insist upon being so himself. This is indeed the course of all honorable men in their intercourse with females, and even bad men are often modest at first, not daring to take liberties till they have allayed suspicion by apparent respect for their intended victim. Women are supposed to be always on their guard—always vigilant of their honor, and I need not say that the least indiscretion on their part is sure to receive an injurious interpretation. This being the case, it becomes evident what must be the effect of any intentional remissness, be it ever so small. All trifling with so priceless a gem as her reputation, all obliquity, however slight, where the sanctity of character is involved, is a tacit expression of unchaste desires, and implies that reciprocal, or even greater liberties will not be unwelcome.

SECTION III.

AVOIDANCE OF TEMPTATION.

THAT the most discreet virtue will sometimes meet with temptations, I shall not deny. But although we cannot in all cases avoid the evil, we have great reason to pray continually for deliverance from it. The dread of temptation indicates a mind well prepared for resistance; those are most easily overcome who have no consciousness of danger, and whose minds are not disturbed by any apprehensions of insecurity. A very large proportion of inducements to crime are such as may readily be avoided by the conscientious and observing. The thoughtless will continue to be ensnared, simply because they are thoughtless. The ship that might safely have made the voyage, for want of good pilotage strikes the rock and founders; thus the simple and the careless are constantly falling around us, for no other reason than their own want of prudence. I need hardly specify the occasions of danger, as female virtue is always in danger, and can

only be maintained by unceasing vigilance, joined with uncompromising principle. Still it may be well not to rely too much upon general statements. Let it be observed, then, that no unmarried female should ever trust herself unnecessarily alone in the company of the other sex. She might be safe, but is infinitely more likely not to be so. The fact of her being where advantage might be taken of her, shows that she has no proper care of herself, and nothing further is needed to provoke an assault upon her virtue, for with many men the power to do wrong is the only incentive required. This precaution is equally necessary to the married woman in reference to all men but the one with whom her fortunes have been publicly united by the most solemn of earthly engagements. In the latter case, both the danger and the guilt are enhanced by several considerations named in a previous section. Her honor, already pledged, her sacred domestic relations, her ineligibility to matrimonial connections, her known, legalized, and privileged intercourse with one man, are all so many circumstances increasing, in her case,

the guilt of exposure to temptations of this kind. The principle here laid down is of universal application. Courtship, parties, pleasure excursions, ordinary social intercourse, and the interchange of civilities, have their occasions for the indulgence of improper passions and practices. Indeed, where the heart is corrupt, an occasion is seldom wanting.

Again, strict regard should be had to modesty of demeanor, and to the conventional rules of life, where these rules are consistent with delicacy. A bold air and a fearless deportment, are misplaced if intended, as a preventive, unless in extreme cases. Where a position not needing these is optional, the true state of the heart is at once detected in spite of such a disguise. Her courage should be reserved for unavoidable dangers, and in such emergencies its exercise is lawful—nay, indispensable. But female innocence is not to be maintained by conflict voluntarily sought; to seek such a conflict, is sufficient evidence of corruption. Safety demands that all hazard should be avoided except that incurred in the discharge of imperative duty. Social life has

its forms, and these, though not always the best, are considered lawful; where they are obviously defective, there ought not to be the least hesitation in laying them aside, but there should be no trifling with established civilities. The rules of decency, of good behavior, of politeness, are not to be trifled with, and an unnecessary deviation from them shows either bad breeding, or bad morals—perhaps both.

It is a practice with some women to pursue a course of flirting, no matter with whom nor for what reason. Dignity of character they do not understand, or will not maintain. Such are for jaunts with whoever will take them, at any or all hours, and under all circumstances. It is possible they may pass through the ordeal without ruin, but where is their prudence? Where is the meekness, sagacity, and modesty that will commend them for future wives—or if wives already, that will soothe the husband's feelings and insure fidelity to the marriage compact? There may be no overt act of licentiousness, and yet the sanctity of feeling must inevitably be impaired, if indeed it ever existed, in such a

heart. The bulwarks of morality are not often prostrated at once; the work of destruction goes on insidiously and imperceptibly, but not the less certainly. The hateful, astounding maturity is reached by degrees, and not, as most suppose, by one sudden, unpremeditated step. The beginnings of vice, the smallest, faintest workings of an evil passion, are to be repressed, or there can be no security to virtue.

No precise rule can be given for conduct in this particular, nor is any necessary. The general rule is this:—avoid all temptations. And where there is an honest purpose, the practical application of this rule will not be difficult. One principle settled, others must follow in their order. Purity must be preserved, whatever else is lost. This excludes the doubtful even, and forbids everything known as injudicious.

SECTION IV.

UNDUE FAMILIARITY.

IN the ordinary course of life, and among persons related by natural ties, or the pursuit of business, there must be associations more intimate than could be justified under other circumstances. Yet even here there are limits to be observed, and limits, too, quite within the range of morality and decency. Safety is to be set above every other consideration, and no domestic or business arrangement should ever be tolerated, unless it guards effectually the purity of female character. Where virtue is not preferred to money, where rigid order is not observed, and the force of principle constantly felt; where male and female are hustled into the same sleeping apartment, or where they are suffered to herd together without proper supervision and without an evident necessity, nothing but the ruin of character should be expected. It would be the grossest folly to hope for any other result. Parents, guardians, entertainers, and employ-

ers are responsible for all regulations of this kind, and for any neglect, should be deemed guilty beyond the possibility of reparation, though not beyond that of reformation. They may reform themselves, but the injuries which they have occasioned to others cannot be recalled.

This familiarity may arise from other associations less immediately corrupting than those now referred to, and originating not in carelessness, but in a desire to do good. The effect of such associations may not be so justly appreciated, because it is longer delayed ; the slow poison, however, kills in due time. Whatever impairs the delicacy of female manners and sentiment, must in the end be fatal to reputation. I shall avail myself of some remarks on this subject, from the pen of one of the most distinguished ministers of the present day. Speaking of female agency in the collection of money for benevolent purposes, he says : " I confess, that while I do not wish to dispense with it altogether, for this is not possible, and if it were, would not be right, I feel jealous lest it should in any measure impair that re-

tiringness of manner, that unaffected reserve, that modesty of demeanor, and that delight in home, which are woman's chief loveliness, and the fascination of her charms. Should the modern practice of employing females so extensively in our religious institutions, make them bold, obtrusive, and fond of publicity, it would be corrupting society at its source, by spoiling them for wives and mothers, however it might fit them to be the instruments of benevolent organizations. Whatever impairs the beauty or diminishes the strength of the home virtues, though it may aid the operations of public institutions, is radically mischievous, and cannot be compensated by any benefit which could be procured, of any kind, or for any object. It is always revolting to my sense of propriety to see a young girl of sixteen or eighteen, pacing a street, knocking at door after door, entering shops, offices, and counting-houses, and addressing herself in the character of a beggar, to any one, and to every one, not excepting young men. Such things are not unknown, perhaps not uncommon. Ministers should be very careful how they employ

young females, and take especial care, when it cannot be avoided, to exert all their influence to repress a spirit of levity and folly, and the least approach to impropriety; and diffuse an air of seriousness and gravity over all that is done in this way, and by such agents. Judicious mothers will be much upon the alert in exercising a salutary vigilance over their daughters, and resist every attempt to engage them in services which may have the least tendency to despoil them of their modesty, simplicity, and love of home.”*

But there is a more deleterious familiarity, because more devoid of principle, than that arising from any of the causes here mentioned.

[We not unfrequently see young women, and even married women, allowing themselves to acquire, if not purposely cultivating, an intimacy with some one or more of the other sex, for which there neither is nor can be any justifiable pretext. I need not allude to the manner of all this—to the welcome opportunity, the studied occasion, the unnecessary cordi-

* The Church in Earnest, by Rev. John Angell James.—(Chap. 6.)

ality, the prolonged interview, frequency, fondness, proximity, liberties, and all the hateful indications of a suspicious morality.] No one who has bestowed the least attention upon the workings of the human heart, or who is not wholly indifferent to conduct, can fail to notice such things, however disguised they may be. [The woman who is thus assaulted, may be innocent, unless something apparently exceptionable in her conduct heretofore, has excited a suspicion of her integrity. But if she reciprocates the treatment, nay, if she does not studiously and rigidly stand aloof from it, the guilt becomes her own.] A special coolness and reserve is due towards all who would claim too much; they forfeit all confidence to ordinary civilities, who presume to take extraordinary liberty. Such liberty is from the outset an impeachment of virtue, and the woman who does not resent it, shows that she is lacking either in sense or principle. I am far from wishing to reduce everything to a dead level; there are some extra occasions, and some buoyant natures, which come not within established rules. They are exceptions to the

precision demanded under all other circumstances. Yet even here, nothing impure, unchaste, or imprudent can ever be admitted. Virtue must have entireness. If it be not complete, it is not at all. Ladies of upright character have a nice discrimination, and it is not presumable that grossness would be tolerated, but they are equally in danger from incipient approaches. No honorable man will make them, no honorable woman should endure them. [Fondling, toying, unnecessary visiting, with everything unmanly, are to be abominated.]

“It is an unspeakable privilege,” says Mrs. Ellis, “enjoyed by the women of England, that in the middle ranks of life, a married woman, however youthful or attractive, if her own manners are unexceptionable, is seldom, or never, exposed to the attentions of men, so as to lead her affections out of their proper channel. How much is gained in domestic and social happiness by this exemption from customs which prevail on the continent, it is here unnecessary to attempt to describe; for I cannot imagine there is any right-minded wo-

man, still less any Christian wife, who does not number it among the peculiar blessings of her country and her sex. Yet even in our privileged land, where the established rules of society are so much more favorable than others, to the purity of social morals, and the sanctity of home-enjoyments, there may occasionally occur an attempted deviation from these rules, on the part of ignorant or unprincipled men. In all such cases, however, the slightest approach to undue familiarity is easily repelled by such a look and manner as all women know how to make use of in discountenancing what is not acceptable. And even in more trifling cases, or when the temptation to be agreeable overcomes the inclination to be otherwise, I believe that a frank and easy manner of speaking of a husband with respect and evident affection, would answer every purpose of putting a stop to such advances; while, on the other hand, nothing can be more likely to invite them, than speaking in complaining terms either of a husband or of his behavior towards yourself.* These

* The Wives of England, chap. 6.

remarks of this excellent writer are doubtless correct, where gentlemen of honorable intentions are concerned, for in their case nothing more is necessary than to remind them of what is proper; they never will designedly trespass upon the sanctity of virtue, and if careless or forgetful, a hint would be sufficient to recall them to propriety. But women as well as men have to meet occasionally a very different description of character, with whom vice is premeditated, and the treatment due to such will be the subject of another section.

SECTION V.

REBUKE OF CRIMINAL OR SUSPICIOUS CONDUCT.

FIRMNESS and purity of character are never better exhibited than in that utterly hostile feeling which is instinctively manifested by all upright women against those who would tamper with their virtue. It is not enough coldly to decline all such overtures, it is not enough secretly to resent them; there should be a

loathing that cannot and will not be restrained—an involuntary indignation bursting forth against the wretch who dares to make, by word or deed, dishonorable insinuations. I need not say that he who can make dishonorable proposals, or whose conduct might lead to such a construction, has assumed the attitude of an enemy, whatever his protestations may be. It is impossible he should be a friend. A friend is always the protector, and never the destroyer of virtue. The gentleman scorns impoliteness even, and by no possibility can he be induced to revolve the murderous idea of seduction. He abhors a doubtful character; he abominates unchasteness, whether in himself or others, and could ask for nothing less than rebuke if he were guilty of unbecoming deportment. This consideration should remove all fear that resentment will be overacted. The loss of virtue is an irreparable loss. [The woman whose character is ruined, might, in almost every instance, thank her seducer to take her life also. Her virtue gone,—and a single misstep is sufficient to destroy it forever,—she thenceforth floats as a useless

wreck in society ; a disgrace to her friends, a curse and pest to the world. Against this irreparable ruin, in comparison to which death is always a blessing, a moderate resentment is neither safe nor becoming. It is not an interest to be contemplated with indifference, as though something would still be left if virtue were gone. The total desolation which must ensue upon the loss of character, makes the temptation to unchastity more to be dreaded than the steel which is aimed at the heart. The course here recommended must not be mistaken for prudery. Prudery is to virtue what the vaunting of the poltroon is to courage—its counterfeit. A genuine virtue will have no occasion to summon up unnatural and revengeful feelings to meet such an emergency. An attack upon virtue, like an attack upon life, is repelled instantly. To discover the danger is to meet it in the best manner possible. Hesitation is ruin. A moderate resistance would only invite aggression, for she who is not in haste to escape from vice, shows conclusively that she places a light estimate upon virtue.

I have no disposition to dwell upon a point which it is hoped comparatively few women are not prepared to meet without these suggestions. Still, the numerous cases of defection from virtue constantly occurring in all parts of the country, are proof that there is a fault somewhere. From observation I am inclined to believe the evil arises in no small degree from the causes now under consideration.

The standard of virtue is too low ; there is not enough of resentment in the female heart against seductive approaches. Instead of meeting the seducer with withering rebuke and burning indignation, he is, if not actually caressed, dismissed with only such marks of displeasure, as serve to invite a repetition of his attempts. Complacency is expressed by the absence of displacency ; the virtue that does not feel itself affronted at insult, is justly regarded as inviting aggression.

That many, whose resentments are evidently too weak, sin more from ignorance than from any unchaste desires, is probably true. Such are naturally unsuspecting, and have been educated to implicit reliance ; they have been

taught to follow, and to follow in all things. Persons of this class easily become the victims of the designing; above wrong designs themselves, they presume that others are actuated by honorable motives. Often as they may have been deceived, still the fatal lure is not spurned, if only disguised with seeming honesty. Were it not that women of this description are apt to move in a contracted sphere, their ruin would be inevitable. Intercourse with the world produces wariness, but this may be far too late for the safety of opening womanhood; and nothing but early education can timely instil the lesson.

As for those females who slide into an easy manner where questions of virtue are at issue, and who indulge themselves or others in liberties inconsistent with unsullied purity, they should know that their character is already suspicious. Little more than temptation can be wanting to complete their overthrow. Whether temptation comes to destroy even the form of virtue or not, the guilt is theirs; the occasion which would have completed their ruin may be wanting, but they are essentially

polluted. If spared, it is an ignominious exemption. The noble indignity that ought to have repelled vice, the conscious purity and inflexible purpose that should have provoked admiration and given unmistakable assurance of integrity, form no part of the character of such women. They are virtuous, only because the poor remains of character have not chanced to be swept away; no invincible might environs them, no indomitable element of self-protection speaks for their future continence. Women of this stamp are not wanted for wives, or if they chance to be married, a painful sense of insecurity lingers about their household. The husband is not sure that prompt resistance will be offered to insult—that artifice cannot succeed—that prudent, utter resolution will adopt every precaution against surprise, and urge to extremes every measure of escape, lest the whole of his domestic happiness should be sacrificed. In early years, and prior to the formation of conubial relations, this delicate sensibility and vigorous resistance to things unfriendly to virtue, may not seem of so much consequence

But let the lot be cast for life, let it be the choice of the heart, sanctioned by the intellect and cemented by children, and the value of uncompromising virtue may then be appreciated.

SECTION VI.

REFINEMENT OF FEELING.

THE high sense of propriety alluded to in the preceding section, has its foundation, partly in the instinctive delicacy of the female mind, and partly in the judicious culture of the moral feelings. All men are born with conscience, but a neglected or perverted education is sufficient to impair, if not entirely destroy this moral faculty. In like manner the natural virtue of woman may be greatly improved by a right education, or it may be as effectually dissipated by a bad one. An uncultivated condition of the moral powers is, therefore, to be viewed as a great misfortune. It leaves the individual exposed to injury from influences that would have been rendered harm-

less by a superior sagacity. One who makes virtue a study, who not only avoids the gross offences which immediately blight a good name, but the slightest deviations from rectitude, will possess a loveliness of character that cannot otherwise be attained. The end of culture is not merely to avoid ruin, though for this purpose it is eminently necessary; yet a higher object is always in view—a positive advantage, which is not to be lost without materially subtracting from the sum of human happiness. Moral refinement enhances the enjoyments of life. It increases the capacity for all goodness; it gilds with perpetual sunshine the circle of domestic and social existence; it is as peace to war, as the open country to the armed fortress, as health to sickness. In the one case we are preserved by successful warfare; in the other by an acknowledged prowess which nothing dare engage. Healthful indeed is the effect of questionless virtue. It has all the merit of courage, without the danger of conflict; it passes unchallenged, because in nameless ways its true character is known beyond dispute.

But this cultivated condition of the moral feelings is especially important in view of the imperceptible progress—the gradualism—of vice. The bulwarks of morality are seldom swept away at once: there is an incipient ruin—a commencement of the work of degradation, which may easily be intercepted by one who knows the consequences to which such incipient evils lead. Discernment is necessary to detect the earliest traces of corruption. Blunt sensibilities will not answer here. Not to note the premonitory symptoms of this moral malady, nay, more, not to remove every predisposing cause, is, in point of guilt, equivalent to the premeditated destruction—not of life, but of character, which is dearer than life. Never is the delicacy of cultivated feeling and sentiment more imperatively demanded, than in searching out and removing the causes that lead to immorality. The progress of corruption is marked by scarcely distinguishable degrees, and nothing short of a high sense of propriety can adequately judge of the stages which the individual has passed, or prescribe directions for a return to virtue.

We cannot too carefully note, nor too sternly resist those lesser deviations from rectitude, which, if not counteracted, must ripen into overt wickedness. "It is but rarely," says Dr. Brown, "that we are assailed with temptations to great evil; and when we are so assailed, the evil itself, and the seductive circumstances that would tempt us to it, are too prominent and powerful not to absorb the whole attention of the mind,—distracting it in a sort of conflict, or hurrying it along, according to the force of the moral hatred of guilt that overcomes it or is overcome. In such cases, then, we think of the present, and scarcely of more than of the present. But how few are the cases of this kind,—and how much more frequently are we called to the performance of actions, in which, if the circumstances of the particular moment alone be considered, the virtue has little merit, or the vice little delinquency. It is of many such little delinquencies, however, that the guilt is ultimately formed, which is afterwards to excite the indignant wrath of every breast, except of that one, in which the horrors of re-

morse, stilled, perhaps, in the dreadful moments of active iniquity, are all that is to be felt in the still more dreadful intervals from crime to crime. It is not of *base perfidy*, then, nor of *atrocious cruelty*, that it is necessary to bid the ingenuous mind beware,—but of offence in which that ingenuous mind, untaught as yet to discern the future in the present, sees only the little frailties that, as proofs of a common nature, are pitied by those who contemplate them, rather than condemned; and attract, perhaps in this very pity, an interest which is more akin to love than to hate. It is, in these circumstances only, or at least chiefly in these circumstances, that the moral character is in peril. There is not a guilty passion from which the heart would not shrink, if that passion were to present itself instantly with its own dreadful aspect. But while the pleasures and the less hideous forms of vice mingle together, in what may almost be termed the sport or pastime of human life, we pass readily and heedlessly from one to the other, till we learn at last to look on the passion, when it introduces itself among the playful

band, only as we gaze on some fierce masquer in a pageant, that assumes an aspect of darker ferocity only to delight us the more,—or which we approach at least with as little apprehension, as if it were the gentle form of Virtue herself that was smiling on us. It is from the beginnings of vice that we are to be saved, then, if we are to be saved from vice itself.”

“ The knowledge of this fatal progression from less to greater vice, far more than doubles the obligation of abstaining from those slight immoralities which might seem trifling if it were not for this progressive tendency. No evil is slight which prepares the heart for greater evil. The highest duty which we owe to ourselves is to strengthen, as much as it is in our power to strengthen, every disposition which constitutes or forms a part of moral excellence; and we err against this high duty, and prepare ourselves for erring against every other duty, as often as we yield to a single seduction, whether it be to do what is *positively* unworthy, or to abstain from the humblest act of virtue which our duty calls us to perform.”*

* Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind, by Thomas Brown.—Lect. xcvi.

Such considerations as are referred to in this extract, are not likely to be appreciated by any with whom virtue is an incident. With them nothing is material but the completed transgression, and that rather in its troublesome consequences than from the subversion of moral principles by which those consequences are always preceded.

[Modesty has ever been regarded as a principal accomplishment of female character. But true modesty and refinement are essentially one. They equally imply a chaste and discerning mind—a mind in which the knowledge of virtue is united with the love of it, and immorality is detested as a violation of nature.] This modesty, so lovely in itself, and so necessary to all that is lovely in woman or valuable in social life, implies not merely perception enough to escape from insult when offered, but critical sagacity in morals. It is that delicacy which gives beauty and gracefulness to conduct,—the wise, just, symmetrical deportment which cannot be seen without being admired.

“————— When I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded; wisdom in discourse with her
Loses discountenanced, and like folly shows;
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed.”*

Milton's imaginary Eve is but a faithful portrait of every truly virtuous woman. [There is nothing of the coarseness of a merely mechanical virtue. Refinement blends softness with firmness, timidity with courage, and freedom with restraint.]

* Paradise Lost.—Book viii.

SECTION VII.

VIRTUE SHOULD BE ABOVE SUSPICION.

It is necessary that virtue should be beyond suspicion. A woman may not have stooped to crime, nor even to gross imprudence, and yet she may fall very far short of an unblemished reputation. Where there is not confidence, there is nothing of domestic happiness. A positively good character is always free, not only from just accusation, but from that dubiousness which can excite unpleasant feelings in those who are interested. The husband must be miserable, unless he has every assurance that can be had that his wife will repel promptly the slightest as well as the greatest immorality. His house may not be deserted, his children may not be scattered by simple imprudence, yet the fierce, uncontrollable passion of jealousy will be waked up, and connubial felicity is at an end. The fact is too obvious that those who will be imprudent, will be more. "He that despiseth little things shall fall by little and little." Besides, were there

no danger connected with imprudence, it is not a light thing to disturb the peace of others by leaving upon their minds an impression that virtue will be slightly guarded. With woman in her several relations of wife, mother, sister, and daughter, are bound up the holiest feelings of our nature, and the sum total of all domestic bliss; it is, therefore, impossible for her to put in jeopardy her reputation, and not create the keenest distress among all those to whom she is related by these tender ties. No virtuous woman would willingly be the occasion of such exquisite torment as must always be produced by apprehensions of this kind. Such a woman could not endure to be suspected, and she would be far from giving the slightest occasion for suspicion. The least wantonness here betokens a mortal fault—the absence of principle, or of discernment, which is scarcely less fatal.

That it is possible or necessary to carry precaution so far as to avoid the suspicion and jealousy of unreasonable minds, I will not assert. There are those who, to maintain chastity, would become tyrants. Such are gov-

erned by caprice, and not by reason. But even these should never have any just cause to complain. A woman who is properly sensible of the importance to her family of that honor on which the permanence of the family compact depends, will always show a deep solicitude to be pure. With her, modesty and propriety are no secondary considerations; she sees in them a sovereign necessity—a vast and controlling consequence, never to be overlooked in the history of her life. She must be remembered as the faithful wife, the excellent mother, the discreet counsellor, the ornament of her family; or as the curse and scourge, the betrayer and corrupter of all her relations. I will not deny that unforeseen exposures may occur, and that these may subject female reputation to injury without blame. Yet even here, the circumstances ought to be a full apology. It should be so evident from the past history of such a person's life, and from all the facts in the case, that she was an involuntary participator in the danger, as to remove every unfavorable impression. Perhaps more might be required. There should be no concealment of

facts, nor any lack of prompt, fearless resistance to the evil. The wife's integrity is the husband's interest; it is his title to her, to his home, to his fireside with its every pleasure. He has a right to know with what care such an interest is guarded. Indifference here is infidelity; either the man cares not for his wife and children, or he must feel a deep and constant solicitude for their preservation. The reasonable man will be satisfied with such conduct as gives assurance of the safety of his domestic treasures, and with nothing less. The least suspicion will not fail to mar his peace, and with the least guilt his hopes are ended. To re-establish confidence is impossible. The guilty may indeed refrain from vice and lead a wary, virtuous life, but there is still left the scar upon character, and the ineradicable danger of a relapse. Were it understood as it should be that the loss of character is irretrievable—that the husband cannot receive the adulteress back to her place as the mistress of his family, nor the father restore a fallen daughter to her former standing, however penitent or reformed either may be—the necessity for great

precaution would not seem exaggerated, nor the least degree of trifling with interests so sacred be ranked as a venial fault. All conduct which can excite suspicion ought to be reprobated among the married, because of its flagrant violation of justice. Vows have been interchanged—hearts pledged for life—the affections reciprocally withdrawn from other objects to be confined to the limits of the sacred compact—and with this joint relation have grown up other interests, solemn, weighty, inestimable. Now it need not be said that it is the height of injustice to invade the rights of either of these contracting parties. For these rights each has paid the full—the only equivalent, by making the surrender and assuming the obligations of the marriage contract. No woman has a right to seem to do what she has not a right to do. In a word, every woman is as much bound to avoid the appearance of evil, as to avoid evil itself. Mrs. Ellis expressed the feeling of every man who justly esteems his wife, when she said: “The more you are dissociated from every other being of his own sex, the more will the mind of your husband dwell upon you with

unalloyed satisfaction.”* This feeling is not peculiar to men; it belongs of necessity to all in the married relation. It may be more acute in man, but it is not confined to him, for the rights are not all on his side. Where there is a treasure to lose, there must be solicitude, and the solicitude arises only from the fear of the loss. But the full development of this subject must be reserved for the next section.

SECTION VIII.

THE INJUSTICE OF UNCHASTITY.

THE enormous injustice of matrimonial infidelity has seldom been considered as it deserves. I shall endeavor to place it in its proper light, though at the hazard of prolixity. The following remarks from Dr. Brown are both just and forcible:

“Affection, I have said, may be considered almost as a form of wealth possessed; and the

* *Wives of England*, chap. i.

most delightful affection which can be given to us, is truly, if I may apply the cold terms of merchandise to the pure commerce of the heart, a species of property, for which the *price* of similar affection has been paid, and to which the laws of wedlock have given a legal and holy *title*. If the guilt of the robber were to be estimated in proportion to the quantity of evil which he knowingly produces, where is it that our most indignant hatred of the crime should be fixed? Not surely on him whom alone we are accustomed to denominate a robber. The wretch who perishes on the scaffold for his sordid thefts, unpitied, perhaps, by a single individual in the whole crowd of gazers, that mark the last faint convulsion of his limbs, only to wonder when the quiverings are to cease,—may deserve the horrors of that ignominious punishment under which he sinks. But does he truly rank in villany with the robber of another class—with him, who would be astonished, perhaps, to have a place assigned to him among common pilferers, but who is in guilt the basest of them all, however noble he may be in titles, and splendid with all that pomp,

which can be alike the covering of vice and of virtue? There may pass, in some stately carriage, while the crowd are still gazing on the body that hangs lifeless before them, some criminal of far deeper iniquity, whose eye too may turn, where all other eyes are fixed, and who may wonder at the increase of crimes, and moralize on their causes, and rejoice in their punishment,—while the carriage in which he reclines, and moralizes at his ease, is bearing him to the house of his friend, by a secret appointment of her who is the mistress of it,—whom months of incessant falsehoods and treacheries were unable to subdue, but whom, by the influence of some finer simulation, he is at last to carry off, as a noble booty, from the virtue and happiness to which she is never to return. The common thief, who steals or forces his way into the house at midnight, has never been treated with kindness and confidence by him whose property he invades; and all which he carries off may, usually, be repaired, without very much difficulty, or may, perhaps, be of a kind which is scarcely of sufficient importance to our convenience, to be replaced by the easy

efforts that might replace it. But what is to repair the plunder of him, whose robbing is of that description which exists only in the heart,—who steals not the object of regard only, but the very capacity of feeling affection and confidence again,—and who, by a single crime, converts, in the eyes of the sufferer, that world of social harmony, which God has made so beautiful, into a world of deceivers and the deceived ! of pleasures that are but illusion, and of misery that is reality !

“Let us imagine one of those domestic groups which form, to the lover of happiness, one of the loveliest spectacles with which the earth is embellished—a family, in the small circle of which, there is no need of distracting and noisy gaieties without, because there are constant tranquillity and enjoyment *within*,—in which the pleasure of loving is, in the bosom of the wedded pair, a delight, that, as blending in one uniform emotion with the pleasure of being loved, is scarcely to be distinguished from that affection which is ever flowing around it,—a delight that grows not weaker, but more intense, by diffusion to the little frolickers around,

who, as yet, know little more than the affection which they feel, and the affection of which they are the objects,—but who are rising into virtue, amid the happiness which virtue sheds.

“In considering such a scene, would it require any very long and subtle effort of reflection to determine, what would be the *greatest injury* which human malice could devise against it, if it were in the power of malice to execute every atrocity which it might conceive? It would be that very injury which the adulterer perpetrates,—the crime of him who can see all this happiness, and can say in his heart, *this happiness shall no longer exist*. A time may indeed come when, if his artifices be successful, this happiness will exist no more,—when she, who was once as innocent as she was happy, shall have been consigned to that remorse, which is to hurry her, too slowly for her own wishes, to the grave,—and when the home which she has deserted, shall be a place of wretchedness and desolation,—where there is one miserable being, who knows his misery, and others who still smile, while they inquire anxiously, with a sort of fearful wonder, for the presence of her, whose

caresses they no longer enjoy,—and are as yet ignorant that a time is to arrive, when they are to blush at the very name of her, to whose knee and embrace of fondness they are longing to return.”*

No pen can possibly delineate all the depravity and misery of this great crime. Orphanage is bliss compared with the state of those children who are deprived of a mother's care in consequence of adultery. It would be a relief to know that their mother was dead, for her name and remembrance would not then be coupled with everlasting infamy. To the husband the blow is almost equally severe. The children forever disgraced, are his own—his life is bound up in theirs, and in them he suffers the full measure of degradation. His confidence, worth more to him than gold, is shaken, and perhaps may never be restored. At all events his early love—his first, most sacred, and every way inestimable domestic joys, are gone, to return no more.

To the unmarried the mischiefs of illicit intercourse are scarcely less. The young woman

* Philosophy of the Human Mind, Lect. lxxxiv.

becomes at once an outcast from respectable society, nor is there the slightest possible chance for her to return to her former position. History will be history to the latest hour of her life, and the recollection of one sad, irretrievable fall will be ever present to embitter the cup of worldly felicity. Woman's character is her all, and he who deprives her of virtue, would, so far as temporal happiness is concerned, be merciful if at the same time he also deprived her of life. He dooms her to wander a blighted, hopeless, rejected being, beyond the power of relief, and solaced only by the prospect of the grave. In one moment her interest on earth perishes. The tender offices of friendship may soothe, but they cannot restore—the hope of reinstatement ceases when the work of seduction is accomplished. Dishonored—ruined, she can find no place for repentance—even her destroyer has no power to remove the evil, were he so disposed.

Notwithstanding the infinite loss and misery occasioned by adultery and seduction, the laws of our country make no provision for the punishment of such offences. If a man's horse is stolen, the thief may be sent to the peniten-

tiary, but if his wife or daughter is stolen & debauched, there is no redress,—none at least that does not add insult to injury. Families may be broken up, their hopes blasted, their names covered with infamy, and the very possibility of happiness cut off from them, yet the law takes no cognizance of the offence, and allows the destroyer to go at large as an honorable citizen. Adultery is not even actionable at law, neither is seduction, unless it results in pregnancy, and then a paltry fine is the only penalty. In England female virtue is equally unprotected by any statutory enactments. “The law,” says Dr. Paley, “has provided no punishment for this offence, [seduction] beyond a pecuniary satisfaction to the injured family ; and this can only be come at by one of the quaintest fictions in the world : by the father’s bringing his action against the seducer, for the loss of his daughter’s service, during her pregnancy and nurturing.”* In one view of the subject, this extraordinary omission of legal restraint, may be regarded as a compliment to the sex. We may say their virtue is too unquestionable to

* Moral Philosophy.—Book iii. part iii. chap. iii.

need such protection, and that those who fall are seduced only because they are not virtuous. This however, is by no means the case, as there is every reason to believe that many who have fallen victims to the vile arts of the seducer, were originally as virtuous as others who have escaped destruction. The authors of their ruin, knowing that they could proceed with impunity, have used every means to accomplish their infernal work. But conceding, as we must, that the virtue of some women is too easy, and that consequently they might with little or no persuasion be corrupted—is this a sufficient reason for allowing it to be done? is the thief left unpunished because he steals property not under lock and key? The fact that some females are improperly accessible, scarcely palliates the offence, as they ought to be considered as objects of compassion, and to be defended, rather than surrendered a prey to lust. The individuals themselves may be worthless, but they cannot be injured alone; they have family connections which must suffer with them in the dishonor, and on whom the disgrace and

expense of such crimes must necessarily be inflicted.

It is unjust to leave virtue unnecessarily exposed. The purest may fall, and nothing short of constant vigilance can preserve any ; shall we, then, leave woman to struggle against every besetment, and to bear up against every temptation—shall we, in fact, let loose upon her the whole herd of the licentious and the unprincipled, and give them full permission to ruin her if they can by any means short of absolute violence ? Shall we leave the peace and the honor of families to the ravages of libertinism ? Shall prattling babes, confiding husbands, and affectionate parents be stript of their choicest blessings without let or hindrance ? Those who make laws, and who fail to protect society from the vices in question, give the strongest assurance that such laws would stand in the way of their own gratification. We cannot expect the vicious to legislate against vice. To plead ignorance would be absurd, though our laws bear marks of having been fashioned in an age when woman was considered only an appendage to society, having no

co-equal honor or consequence with the male part of our species. But no intelligent legislator of the present day would wish us to find an apology for him in this old relic of barbarism. The true key to the legal relations of licentiousness, is the immorality of public men. In general, they are not Christians, nor have they any regard for that high standard of purity which the gospel requires.

It will be seen from the above that for gross injustice, unchastity is hardly to be paralleled in the annals of guilt. The intercourse of the sexes is not prohibited, but confined to limits which the Author of our being has fixed, and which cannot be disregarded without immediate and overwhelming ruin. The woman who stoops to such wickedness, has done the greatest evil in her power, both to herself and to others, and may not complain of the abandonment which inevitably awaits her.

SECTION IX.

CHASTITY ESSENTIAL TO THE EXISTENCE
OF FAMILIES.

WHATEVER advantage might arise to the community or to individuals from the family relation, is utterly defeated by immorality. Indeed such relations cannot be formed except on the supposition of virtue in the contracting parties. No honorable man will knowingly connect himself with a dishonorable woman. The want of virtue precludes the possibility of matrimonial alliances, unless among the mutually dissolute. But even these could not enter into the marriage relation without assuming vows of fidelity. Such a contract is a pledge of virtue. The parties voluntarily bind themselves to forsake all others, save the one with whom the union is formed, and this vow is not of force for a time only, but until "death." It is on this ground that some females who have been guilty of immorality, have subsequently married. As reformation is not impossible, and as entrance upon married life necessarily

involves a pledge of future integrity, those who can inspire sufficient confidence to induce offers of this kind, may marry, notwithstanding their former vices. Still the chances of a respectable marriage are greatly diminished, and there must always be a painful sense of insecurity, as well as various other unpleasant considerations, connected with such marriages.

The value of unblemished reputation, considered as the basis of domestic happiness, cannot be estimated. Hope is entertained even in the darkest hour, that those who have never been known to yield to temptation, will yet be found true; but where a knowledge of past betrayals is added to present danger, there can be no ground for confidence. Reminiscences of this kind,—if such faults can ever be so far absent from the mind as to entitle them to the appellation,—are the most bitter ingredients in the cup of misery. And the prudent will hesitate to connect their destiny where historical associations, instead of relieving, shall only enhance the worst of apprehensions.

It is not, however, among the unmarried that the greatest necessity for virtue is seen. Much

as chastity is needed as a passport to connubial life, its chief importance relates to a more advanced period—to that life to which it is the most essential prerequisite. In the last section I have shown the great injustice of invading connubial rights, and it now only remains to point out more fully than was necessary at that time, the total incompatibility of this vice with the family relation—or, in other words, to show that the relation is founded in virtue, and naturally ceases when virtue is extinct. Priceless as is the wealth which every man has in his wife, that wealth is his no longer than she is pure. Her corruption is her loss; the bond, otherwise indissoluble except by death, is broken; the hearts that were one “for better or for worse,” are separated, never again to be united. No fondness of children for a parent, no pleadings of helpless infancy, no sacred offices of maternal care, no hallowed and long-standing friendship, no holy love can prevent the impending blow. The adulteress must be driven from the bed she has defiled, and become an alien to those of whose love she is no longer worthy. Hope there cannot be, at least in this world. Other offences

may be atoned for by reformation and repentance, but here they can avail nothing towards averting the doom of the transgressor. However gladly the heart would relent, and forgive the past, for the sake of the future, such compassion is wholly impossible; the offence has dissolved the relation, and she that was a wife is a wife no more. While her vows were kept, nothing could deprive her of that sacred character, but now that they are broken, nothing can restore it to her. The family falls to pieces on the occurrence of licentiousness, as naturally as any other contract expires when its conditions are violated. Mutual, and total, and perpetual chastity was the only condition on which such a relation could be instituted, and when there is a departure from this in either party, the relation is inevitably dissolved. The legal ceremony of decreeing a divorce, is nothing more than an adjustment of the law to the facts of the case; it is simply a recognition of the state of the parties. No element of separation is contained in the act of divorce, and the divorced would still be one, were it not for the crime which has separated them.

Let it then be understood that virtue is essential to all the cherished blessings of social life ; that without its presence the family is a wreck beyond recovery, and all its members cursed with woes lasting as life and heavier than death. Indeed without virtue, society is impossible except in that low and bestial form,—a form lower infinitely than savage life,—which marks the brothel. Between the sanctity of marriage, and the profanation of unrestrained debauchery, there is no middle ground. If we reject the one, the other must follow. The woman who is not familiar with this conclusion, and on whose heart does not press the immense responsibility of maintaining inviolate this trait of character, should be alarmed at her position, and pray for a solicitude which both nature and society have made so necessary to her preservation. Not to fear is not to know. Danger besets the path of every female ; and nothing but constant vigilance can secure to her the honor and innocence on which, more than on everything else, her future happiness depends.

SECTION X.

JUST VIEWS OF THE SOCIAL RELATIONS.

IT must be obvious to all, that the preservation of that strict and unblemished morality which alone can give permanence to the family relation, requires a full knowledge of the interests involved. A treasure will not be guarded unless it is known to be a treasure. The female who values these relations slightly, is too ignorant or too perverse to be a suitable guardian of the trusts reposed in her; she has made a contract which she has neither the disposition nor the power to fulfil. Not but that she might have both; for, if she entered upon the married state with honest intentions, there is nothing in the way, but her own want of reflection. The sacrifice she made was voluntary, and laid another under equally imperative obligations. Nor was there anything peculiarly onerous exacted of her—she made only such pledges as every upright woman gladly makes before entering into the conjugal relation, and such as are absolutely indispensable to the exist-

ence of that relation. It may be that her choice was not the wisest nor her lot the happiest, but these are things which mortals cannot control. Nothing more was required than the exercise of common sense and common prudence; for if superior talents and sagacity were necessary to a matrimonial choice, then by far the greater part of mankind could never marry, as they have not these qualities. But infallibility is not required of human beings, and those who do the best they can, have reason to be satisfied with what they have done, and expect the blessing of God upon their lot in life. Murmurings and repinings are out of the question; they are an insult to Providence, and evince, not only dissatisfaction with some particular social evils, but with the laws of virtue itself. Above all, such a spirit, manifested by one sustaining the sacred relation of a wife, is unbecoming and dangerous. If the sphere which ought to be filled by her proves insufficient or uncongenial to her taste, we may rest assured that no very urgent temptation will be necessary to draw her from the path of duty. To guard against this unseemly and wicked state of feeling should

be the endeavor of every virtuous woman. The man of her choice may have faults,—for all men as well as all women, have faults,—but this ought not to cool the ardor of affection, nor prevent it from being as exclusive at any subsequent time as it was when she first became affianced to him. He is still a man—still hers by the ordinance of heaven, and though not without faults, deserving of confidence and esteem. It is the deepest ingratitude to let the heart become estranged from one who has sacrificed so much to give a proof of affection, and who asks nothing unreasonable as the condition of his love.

It is no secret that the whole treasure of domestic happiness may be squandered at any moment by a ruthless spirit of indulgence—kindred, self, and family may be hurried into wretchedness from which nothing shall ever be able to recover them. To be a wife is to be intrusted with this amazing responsibility. Interests valued more than life centre in her, and must perish if her virtue fails. On her hangs the peace of her house, the stability of its hopes, and the home of those to whom she has given birth. We can easily imagine how important

it must be for one so situated to command every wayward propensity, and allow of no improper desires. The limits that have been fixed to the range of her affections, are no trifling regulation, that caprice may set aside at pleasure. She has bound herself, and the chain should ever be welcome—welcome as the institution of nature, and the price of all her connubial joys. Many things which seem harmless to superficial observers, and which would be really so, were there no corruption in human nature to lead us astray, are to be shunned because they peril the weighty obligations of marriage. They who have assumed these obligations are thereby placed under new circumstances, and the liberty which once was admissible is so no longer. Something is due to this extraordinary position. The character that bears with it the fate of others is privileged, and may exercise uncommon prudence without the charge of fastidiousness or idle display.

Courage here is worse than poltroonery; it is criminal indifference to virtue—nay more, it is wantonness seeking an opportunity for gratification. Far otherwise will it be with the

discreet and the virtuous. They hazard nothing that can be avoided. Satisfied with their condition, replete with just views of the vital importance of their station, they consult only how to maintain that position reputably to the end. In short, no woman is fitted to be the head of a family who has not a lively sense of the new and interesting consequence imparted to her as a wife. She cannot henceforth live or die unto herself. Another has claims upon her that must never depreciate. She is sacred to one, and must take all pains to remain forever sacred to him. It may demand thought, and care, and self-denial, to maintain and make manifest this appropriated character—this sacred exclusiveness, which elevated her to such an alliance. But of this she will not complain; it is only the natural result of living exposed to temptations. The recompense for such pains is sure, in the felicity inspired in the hearts of others and in her own consciousness of virtue.

CHAPTER IV.

Intellectual Education.

SECTION I.

DEMANDS OF THE AGE.

THE education of woman should fit her for the age in which she lives. In a period of darkness, when intellectual cultivation was unknown and unregarded, the mind of woman might be neglected without specially enhancing her danger or disgrace. She might live with the ignorant in comparative safety, for the general ignorance would give equal security to all. But circumstances greatly change when we place her under the keen surveillance of the educated—of men too who are always too much inclined to take advantage of her ignorance. She cannot live in ignorance among educated men, unless at the hazard of virtue and the certain loss

of respectability. This alone is a sufficient reason for at all times conforming female education to the actual state of education in the country. Yet there are other reasons equally urgent for this course.

1. In an enlightened country the entire business of the people partakes of a scientific character, and if women are not educated they must inevitably be excluded from all responsible and profitable stations in society. They cannot teach because they have never learned; of the several professions they know nothing; with the arts and sciences as applied to mechanics and practical affairs they are unacquainted; and consequently all posts of supervision—all duties involving a knowledge of science, find them without preparation, and are therefore assigned to men as alone competent to their discharge. Thus woman sinks to drudgery. Her ignorance disqualifies her for any higher part than that which is allotted to brute force. A caste is formed,—by degrees it is true, but not the less certainly,—and in due time fashion or custom excludes her as promptly as ignorance before had done. At first she was simply inca-

pacitated by ignorance, but now her very injuries are made a chain to bind her in perpetual servitude. If females have, as they surely ought to have, intellectual attainments fitting them for any employments to which they may be otherwise adapted, they will be able to secure their share of honorable and lucrative stations, instead of becoming menials—the lowest drudges in kitchens and shops. Education comprehends the method of business, and the uneducated must be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, while the educated enjoy both the responsibility and the emolument. It is because woman has not the requisite education that we see so many reduced to the extremest poverty in all our cities; they sew for a pittance that just sustains life, and even have to beg for employment on these hard terms, where, under other circumstances, they might easily earn a comfortable living. Nor is this to be viewed as happening only in particular instances; it is the degradation and inconvenience of woman—of half our species, and not barely of a few individuals. Her opportunities are cut down, and whatever may be the necessity, she can only

provide for herself and others at a vast disadvantage. This helplessness becomes hereditary—it is transmitted from one generation to another, till the whole female race is degraded and made miserable.

2. Such is the connection of science with mind that some degree of education is essential to the knowledge of our wants. The ignorant know not what they need. Like savages, they remain stationary, because science has not disclosed to them the higher degrees of improvement and of happiness which are possible to mankind. A full perception of what we need is one of the strongest motives that can be brought to bear upon human conduct. It is indeed irresistible. In order to this, however, there must be more than a faint impression of want; the facts must be brought home to the mind with the clearness of demonstration. Let females perceive thus plainly their real needs; let them come under the influence of a positive knowledge of their interests, and they will do for themselves. Policy cannot cashier them, usage will not reconcile them, nor weakness render them unsuccessful. But until they

know their privileges, and know them so well as to feel keenly their own degradation while deprived of them, no improvement is to be expected. Learning has created a new state of society, and the wants of the human race are not only multiplied, but better understood. Woman should know her necessities as a member of civilized and refined society; she should feel the constant stimulus of convictions founded on her actual relations to the world around her. Where all are thoughtless, and where none have the advantages of science, of course such an obligation would not be peculiarly hers, but in this country the other sex have education and will continue to have it, whether females are educated or not.

3. Next to the considerations already mentioned, is the fact that efficiency is very much dependent on a knowledge of capacity. Education reveals the capacity of those who possess it. They know what they can do, as well as what ought to be done. It is this consciousness of ability that makes the civilized everywhere so much superior to savages. [An ignorant woman is not prepared to assert her rights,

because she neither knows them nor the ability which she has to defend them. Did she realize her true position, she would feel that equal strength had been given her, though not always in the same form, as to the other portion of the human race. Everything necessary would be as much within her reach as within the reach of those who, presuming upon the weakness of ignorance, have arrogated to themselves such an undue proportion of privileges and of consequence.]

SECTION II.

EQUALITY WITH MAN.

WOMAN, as the partner of man, was in many respects designed to be his equal, but an almost totally perverted course of training has made her condition one of inferiority in everything. She is degraded, rather than subordinated; her situation is not barely peculiar, it is menial. Justice demands an improvement founded on the true dignity of woman's nature.

Every scheme of education contemplates the character of its subjects, and no scheme can be tolerable which does not adjust itself to peculiarities of character. Females may be naturally more volatile than men, they may be less inclined to the drudgery of scientific deduction or the revery of metaphysical speculation, but all this militates nothing against genuine strength of intellect. Viewing them as we do, under the disadvantages of mal education, or of no education at all, it is hardly to be expected that they should escape the imputation of weakness. The derogatory assumption that mental imbecility is an essential characteristic of women, deserves no serious refutation. Their comparative intellectual ability is to be admitted without the formality of argument. Indeed an attempt to defend their peerage in this respect is scarcely pardonable. It is enough that we observe, for the sake of those who may have overlooked the fact, that wherever females have had equal opportunities with the other sex, either on the throne, in the halls of science, or in the management of domestic affairs, they

have never been wanting, they have exhibited equal talents and made as great attainments.

How absurd to introduce the fooleries of modern gaiety to the notice of such a being; and how vicious to make exact conformity to them a matter of grave importance! The secret should be disclosed, and juvenile females should know that this punctilious attention to fashion is a broad impeachment of mental integrity. Here is the great fault of our course. We trifle with powers that cannot be neglected or perverted without subsequent and measureless evils. We can easily appreciate the extreme degradation when men become venal and effeminate in mind. But the frequency of the thing, or, rather, the settled conviction that nothing higher is to be expected of them, has rendered us callous to this species of vice in females. Among men, merit makes the man; but no such magnanimous sentiment gilds the prospect of woman. She is made to feel from the first that she is a mere creature of circumstance, and is put upon a course of external parade, for the sole purpose of attraction. In short, she is taught that something besides herself must com-

mend her to others, and that on some other besides herself depends her happiness. All this is false in fact, and should be discarded both in theory and in practice. It is true that women as well as men are intended for marriage; but that this destination should be deemed a paramount consideration is very ridiculous. Matrimonial connections are a part of the present constitution of things—a matter of course, and no uncommon qualifications are demanded in view of such connections, that would not be necessary without them. Relations vastly more important than those which connect a single individual with another for a few years, are sustained by every human being. A desire for the social virtues is laudable, and it is not to be supposed that such desire, or the qualifications which it seeks, is foreign to that higher character which belongs to our nature. Temporal institutions in many cases are subordinate, and particularly so in this, and it is therefore incompatible with human dignity to be greatly influenced by what upon the whole is so evidently unimportant. The rage of parents is to make their daughters *interesting*, and the schools try to bestow

engaging accomplishments, as if the great object was to insure a marriage, rather than impart the qualifications requisite for a woman in life. It is the degradation of mind—the supposition that females may properly be so treated—against which we enter our protest. No dependence or physical inferiority can either justify or palliate such negligence in the development of character. Females thus educated are unfit for either married or single life. If the arts of fascination prove successful, they become the scourge of families ; if not, they are the reproach of every circle. They want what it is the business of education to impart—a loftiness of conception, a consciousness of ability, and an inflexibility of virtue equal to every exigence of life. We hear much of “*amiable weaknesses*,” and the world is ready to excuse ignorance in a woman. But the charity is not needed. Let justice be done ; let knowledge which is power, be given, and the female mind will gloriously redeem itself from the aspersion of such insulting kindness.

With an education equal to that afforded to men, we have not the slightest reason to sup-

pose that women would continue to exhibit those traits which have so often made them subjects of unenviable remark. These very failings are the characteristics, not only of their condition, but of the condition of all those of our race whose education has been neglected; they belong not to woman as woman, but to woman as the victim of ignorance—they mark only her state and not her sex. This fact, well understood, would banish those supercilious airs and that unjustifiable contempt which men are accustomed to indulge towards the infirmities of woman, and awaken possibly a wholesome regret for the great injustice done to her in keeping her so long degraded. Woman also in this, her true intellectual position, would exert a vastly greater influence in elevating man.

SECTION III.

ABILITY TO ADVANCE SCIENCE AND THE ARTS.

At present, very few females participate in the intellectual movements of the age. Some

of the more fortunate have acquired honorable distinction for their talents and attainments,
but the great mass is still unaffected by popular strife for improvement, and will remain so,
not for want of abilities, but for lack of opportunities. Their education contemplates nothing of the kind. [They are taught submission,
not barely to the authority of a husband, but
to the maxims and customs of the world around
them.] Acquiescence and passivity are the

characteristics of the policy which has wielded their destiny. An instance of greater tyranny cannot be found, than is this effort to circumscribe the mental operations of a whole race of beings. Are there no improvements to be made in anything that falls under the supervision of woman? Is everything as it should be in her conduct, in her relations, and in the prospects of the future? If not, the eye of philosophy, the purest religious and scientific intelligence, must scan the field of observation and dictate the requisite changes.

It ought to be conceded by every one that the whole range of improvement is as fully open to woman as to man. There is not a

possible truth nor a possible virtue, but what she may acquire. [Those discoveries which belong to her particular sphere should by all means be made by her, for in that sphere she is the natural explorer, and ought by all means to have precedence. It would appear very absurd for men to be taught the art of agriculture by women, and absurd it would be, yet not more so than for men to teach women how to supervise the nursery or to guard their own health or morals.] The proprieties of female life and labor are to be determined by females; they should be held responsible for advancing these entirely beyond the observation of the other sex, so that if a man should offer his advice, the offer would be looked upon as absurd. If woman has a particular sphere, she must in the nature of things be able to accumulate experience and extend inquiry in that sphere farther than those who do not and cannot share this position with her. At present her right to determine is not fairly admitted, and much less is any such determination expected. Woman, according to the popular notion, is an appendage to society for which man graciously provides,

without troubling her to assume a positive existence. She may well disdain the kindness, however honestly offered, since its acceptance could not but involve her degradation. Let females know that they have a position that cannot be invaded, and let them by the vigorous application of their own minds give evidence that the principles of that position or sphere are already too well understood to require foreign interference. Then shall virtue in every department be as unquestionable as it is now in some of the more obvious; or in other words, women will so adjust the customs of social life particularly affecting them, that no one shall have cause to complain. As things now are she is betrayed, and finds out too late the insult; she is duped by the pretension of superior skill, and is hurried off the stage without an opportunity to retrieve her character.

For centuries the education and circumstances of woman have been neglected. In some countries and those professing to be civilized, she is even at the present time almost on a level with the brutes. The lowest labor, such as in our own country is always assigned to

brutes, is imposed upon her, and not the slightest provision made for any improvement in her future condition. She is to all intents and purposes an inferior being, on whose elevation no pains or expense need to be bestowed. From this long oppression the sex is emerging slowly, though at the rate of progress which now marks the work of emancipation, ages must elapse before woman regains her proper place in the social system. Her own mind is required to grapple with the injustice which she suffers, and to develop the truths on which permanent disenthralment depends. Usurpation is rarely self-relinquished. Man may not be greatly opposed to her restoration, but it should not be expected that he will efficiently labor for it; he cannot know all that she might know, or do all that she might do. Women have power both to assert and to maintain all the rights which belong to their nature, and it is a power which their oppressors have not, even were they inclined to use it.

That much requires to be done which is possible only to the female mind, especially in its own behalf and in its own department, we

fully believe; but the career of female enterprise is not necessarily thus restricted. Woman is entitled to act a part on the general theatre of life, in all those pursuits from which the peculiarities of her constitution do not exclude her. She has mind, and may therefore take part in everything mental. The whole domain of science belongs as much to her as to her brother. When she feels herself equal to the work, when at last the public expects it of her, she will answer for herself in this matter, but not before. It is with her now as with the down-trodden of every age and of every race. The slave invents nothing—improves nothing, because he is laboring under the incubus of inequality. Depression seizes upon him and paralyzes the powers of high achievement. Ignorance itself is inferiority, and, apart from all other considerations, is productive of the same depressing effects. The poor, illiterate peasant is devoid of improvement, because he is unconscious of his capacity for such a work. We see under every barbarous and tyrannical government this stagnated condition of the public mind. After the people have become ignorant

to a certain extent, all idea of liberty is forgotten, and the arts and sciences cease to have any existence in the popular mind. This unhappy state of things characterizes the ignorant everywhere, and if females are destitute of invention and enterprise, if they waste their powers on frivolities or pervert them to vice, it is solely for want of education. Give them their true position as intellectual beings, and we shall have no occasion to reproach the sex with faults which were never yet separated from a degraded and illiterate condition. It is a matter of great importance to woman that this change be made, though it is almost equally important to the other sex, for man needs the stimulus of competition and the force of example. If woman leads the way in science, as she is well able to do, ignorance will find no shelter in her society. He who is too little cultivated to pass with credit among gentlemen, will not attempt to palm himself off upon the ladies. And when the ladies have pushed forward their inquiries so as to excite emulation, we may hope that their competitors will feel a nobler ambition, and that the work of improvement will not, as

now, be confined to a few. Thankful are we that female education is beginning to attract attention in proportion to its merits. We have, in some parts of the country, not only seminaries in which a few superficial accomplishments are taught, but female colleges embracing all the sciences. This is as it should be, and reflects credit on the age.

SECTION IV..

SOURCES OF PLEASURE.

THE pleasures of science must of course be unknown to the uneducated, and the history of mankind shows conclusively that where this elevated class of enjoyments is wanting, the loss will be supplied as far as possible, by such pleasures as are still within reach—namely, the sensual, and the puerile. [That excessive fondness for dress, and for mere external display, so characteristic of a certain description of females, has its origin chiefly in their intellectual habits. Familiarity with things of greater con-

sequence would have the same effect in correcting a perverted, we might rather say neglected taste, in the one sex, that it has in the other. Give to woman such general knowledge of all the departments of science as shall make her perceive the relative importance of things, and she will not hesitate to put away "childish things." Her mind has hitherto been forced to rest in what is superficial, because it knew no better. She has contracted no taste for nobler pleasures, because she has had no opportunity to contract such a taste. Her education is frivolous, and therefore frivolity distinguishes her through life,—or, at least, that part of life in which she can well have a choice of pursuits or pleasures. Few women would perhaps be under the necessity of resorting to literature for constant entertainment, but every woman might make it an auxiliary pleasure; it would form an agreeable relaxation in the intervals of toil, and save the necessity for some kinds of gratification which now seem to prevail only from a desire to avoid absolute dullness. It is quite clear that gossiping and tattling arise, not so much from actual malevolence, as from

a peculiar restlessness common to uncultivated minds. Enlarge the stock of knowledge, and we remove all desire for communicating such trifles as are retailed by the gossip. As a man who is really rich, and has thousands at his command, would not wish to exhibit a few shillings, so a truly wise woman would feel no pleasure in dwelling upon, or in communicating matters of no importance. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and will continue to speak; hence, till we replenish the heart with other and higher knowledge, we can expect nothing but the worthless or vicious details of the common tattler or gossip-monger.

The female mind is unquestionably competent to the highest walks of science, and even if ignorance were not accompanied with the vice of petty scandal, it would be exceedingly unjust to cut off one half of the species from all the pleasures and advantages connected with mental pursuits. We often see the human mind miserably straitened in its resources, especially the mind of woman, who is necessarily excluded from a direct participation in many of the more athletic exercises. Yet in

science she may participate with the profoundest; there is nothing here too great for her strength, or too rough and repulsive for her delicacy. She can ponder the sublimest truths without endangering her morals or meeting the rude gaze of the multitude. And when beset with trials,—such as fall to the lot of all human beings, and particularly to her,—she can retreat to the unfailing pleasures of study. Thus, in communion with the great and good of the past and the present, with the actual and the possible, she will be able to bear up with dignity under all the circumstances of life, and to roll back upon her oppressors every reproachful epithet. There is a numerous class of current phrases derogatory to the female mind, which are thrown out on every occasion by men who see woman only as she is, and not as she ought to be.

But were there no special propriety in opening to her this resource, it is surely enough that she is on a level with man. We have never doubted the advantages of science to men, and, as a partaker of human nature, woman certainly has an equal claim to an

equal chance for any advantages of this kind. Her condition will thereby be greatly improved, inasmuch as the narrow and unintellectual character of her pleasures has too frequently been the sole cause of her degradation in the public estimation, and of the ruin of her morals.

In youth the natural buoyancy of spirits may sustain the individual, but as age advances something more will be necessary; and if no stock of knowledge is acquired during this period, the mind is doomed to a monotony that disqualifies it for lofty aspirings, and prolongs through life a desire for the puerile gratifications of dress and amusement.

“A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.”

Incapable of intellectual happiness, resort is had to the worthless and often vicious pleasures of sense. The intellect, divorced from the senses, is stupefied, and the unhappy being is borne by the latter, like Phaeton in the chariot of Jupiter.

Give to woman noble pursuits, and she will act a noble part. Virtue in her requires as

sublime motives as it does in the other sex. She must be equally intelligent; the nature and the relative importance of things, with full liberty of pursuit, must be hers, or she cannot feel the inspiration of high achievement, nor the happiness of high and honorable motives. The mind, if confined to low endeavors, drivels in hopeless inferiority. It is cut off at once from elevated virtue, because denied elevated opportunities; and the consequent feebleness of virtue must ever be attended with diminished felicity—virtue and happiness are to each other as cause and effect. The happiness of woman, therefore, can only be increased by increasing the means of her virtue. And towards this we know that education contributes in an eminent degree.

SECTION V.

SELF-PRESERVATION.

ONE prominent advantage of mental culture, is the security which it brings. A woman

should be able to guard herself. Her physical weakness subjects her to danger from which nothing but keen discrimination can protect her. But while it is necessary that she should be enlightened in order to avoid physical coercion, we readily admit that her chief danger lies in another direction. It is the mastery of mind—the acknowledged pre-eminence in opportunities and attainments, that she has most reason to fear. These place her in a position of inferiority ; she may take advice, but may not presume upon equality of judgment. How much such a state of intellectual subordination would subserve the purpose of the seducer may easily be imagined. Upon a well-cultivated mind, and especially upon one of equal attainments, his blandishments would probably be lost. In such cases, art meets art, and science meets science, so that there is no chance for imposture. But aside from the overreaching and inveiglement to which a deficient female education gives so many temptations, there is no small danger arising from imperfect views of virtue. [The uneducated female has only confused ideas on the subject of morals.] She

has no well-balanced principles—no just and extended views of propriety in reference to human conduct. Education refines the sensibilities, and improves the judgment, so that we can “approve things that are excellent,” and flee from such as are bad. Infatuation always treads upon the heels of ignorance. None need mistake here. Could we search the records of delinquency, we should find the number of uneducated culprits disproportionately great. But mere exemption from open or secret vice, is not all we should desire. There is a virtue practicable by means of knowledge, which allays the intensity of fear, and purifies the moral atmosphere from those evils which endanger social happiness. The works of darkness lose all their effect when not confined to their own obscurity. Intelligence is the mighty defence of our nature ; and females are peculiarly obnoxious to injury while attempting to make their way through the world without its protection. “ Evil communications corrupt good manners ;” but where the “ manners” are bad, as is now too often the case, and the subject of them is embarrassed by general igno-

rance, it is no wonder that the progress of ruin is speedy, and the consummation perfect. These days of proud discovery and unrivaled charity are likely to do something for the social circle. Things which have long passed as allowable, are beginning to be called in question, and several enormities are already in course of detection and exposure.

It would not be difficult to prove that many principles, now prevalent in female education, are diametrically opposed to good morals. "The light that is in them has become darkness." Nothing can be conceived more efficient for the purpose of degradation, than the idea of inferiority which is so constantly kept before their minds. This illusion is a spell upon the active powers; it leaves the person, as we have before remarked, accessible to the counsels and intrigues of unprincipled advisers—persons whose very presence is contamination.

We will not say that escape from dangers of this kind is impossible, but we affirm that it is wrong, in the highest degree, to tolerate such exposure. A shield should be afforded for the protection of woman from all such assaults, and

then if she falls, "like stars that set to rise no more," it will be no fault of those who were the guardians of her character. The means of preservation were in her own hands, and she must abide the ruin which she brings upon herself. Towards those who are ensnared by ignorance, much more compassion is due, although such compassion can never replace either virtue or respectability. Let females be properly educated—that is, educated as much as the other sex—and the imminent peril of social life is removed. They will see most clearly what is essential to irreproachable virtue, and can at all times avoid even a suspicion of impurity. The integrity of their character will not need to be taken as a fact, assumed without evidence, for the proofs of integrity will be both abundant and unquestionable. The proper place, the proper time, and the proper manner of all actions, will proclaim innocence much better than formal testimony could substantiate it, if ignorance had so far mistaken propriety as to awaken suspicion.

SECTION VI.

DEFENCE OF HER RIGHTS.

THAT women have their rights in the social system cannot be denied. Various estimates have been formed as to the extent and character of these rights. Some, not satisfied with depriving the female of all political privileges and duties, would place her under the same circumstances, socially and intellectually. This spirit has long characterized the course of popular education. It was not enough that woman should be divested of almost every civil right except that of mere protection, a right which is extended even to brutes ; but she must be made to feel her degradation in mind as well as in body. The frivolous and restricted education allotted to her could only awaken regret for what she had not, without at all satisfying the demands of her intellectual capacity. This evil is now universally felt, and there are indications of a return to juster principles. But return will not take place, to any sufficient extent, unless the female mind is aroused to its

own interests. Woman must assert her own rights, or they will not be asserted; she must vindicate herself, or fail of receiving justice. Her rights are as palpable and unquestionable as those of men, but she has not known them, and therefore not demanded them. They would long since have been accorded to her in all their fulness, if she had made her appeal to the tribunal of public opinion, and enforced that appeal by the irresistible weight of argument at her command. By what means has she been defrauded? certainly not from any intentional injustice. Man has wronged woman through ignorance, and not through malice. She has suffered because her guardian was ignorant of the measure of her claims. To remove this error is the first thing necessary towards a reform in female education; and for this purpose large dependence must be placed upon the intelligent coöperation of females.

They are the first, if not the principal, sufferers by this unjust treatment. They are therefore the best and most authoritative advocates of reform. From them the voice of complaint will be heard with respectful attention,

and even indignant upbraidings for such great injustice would not be deemed out of place. What right has man to arrogate to himself all the higher institutions of learning? Woman shares with him the common school and the academy, but why is she excluded from college—from every college in the land? The State bestows its largest benefactions on these institutions, and the most able instructors that can be procured are employed to give the highest practicable finish to education; yet woman may not approach these halls of science, her step would profane them, she must be reserved for a lower destiny. Occasionally, without such advantages, she will rise above her caste; the force of genius is sufficient to ensure eminence in spite of all obstacles: but this does not at all palliate the outrage upon her rights. The fact that some women become distinguished under their peculiar privations, only shows the enormous wrong done to the sex by withholding the proper facilities for distinction. In reserving to our sex all these advantages—in monopolizing opportunities, we have thrown almost the entire mass of literary and professional eminence into

one side of the scale. Hence the social system is not equally balanced, and cannot be, till the cause of this disparaging inequality is removed. But the effects of the evil are not confined to woman. As the "mother of all living" she transmits her infirmities to her offspring, and they must feel, to the latest hour of life, the disadvantages of having had an ignorant mother. The domestic circle—that place so filled with hallowed recollections—will become the source of bitter regrets to the discriminating mind, in after life. It need not be argued that women have by far the greater share in forming the youthful character, as no one denies the fact; and yet we withhold education from those who, as teachers, fill the most responsible station. That woman, in view of her maternal duties, should insist upon literary equality, is perfectly reasonable, although such a consideration is by no means the first motive that should induce us to do her justice. She has personal, inalienable rights which must be restored, and the restoration of these is a sufficient motive for the contemplated change of policy. If her own mind sees clearly the degradation which it is now

suffering, she will need very little assistance in gaining a true position : a consciousness of the necessity involved in her plea, will give to that plea irresistible force.

Ignorance cannot defend itself. Woman must be elevated before she will realize the wrongs inflicted upon her. At every point she needs the impenetrable ægis of knowledge. Put her in possession of the means of defence, and she will not be wanting in ability to use them. Give her science, and she will not relinquish the gift.

It is principally through ignorance on her part that her morals have been so recklessly assailed by the customs of the day. An educated class of females would never have acquiesced in these abuses. Too ignorant to lead, she has submitted to be led, and the consequences to domestic happiness have been incalculably ruinous. Christianity itself has not been able to arrest the tide of licentiousness and folly. Society has moulded her character ; she has given herself up to a succession of corrupt, debasing compliances, as though God had not made her with independence enough to be vir-

tuous, or with mind enough to be rational. Without literature, woman must ever be the sport of this tyranny. She may have religious principle, but that principle will be sacrificed for want of knowledge to give it expression. As a subordinate in the intellectual world, others must give direction to her life, nor will she feel competent to sit in judgment on the character of their doings. Nothing less than equality of mental culture can either effect her disenthralment or secure the possession of her rights, if by any foreign agency they could be restored to her.

SECTION VII.

REFINEMENT OF MANNERS.

I HAVE intimated, in a former chapter, how much female virtue depends upon refined moral feelings. That coarseness which amounts to the slightest indelicacy is hazardous, because it proclaims to others a deficiency of virtue, and also because it originates in a depraved or de-

fective condition of the moral principle. I shall not repeat what has already been advanced under this head, but endeavor to show the connection between intellectual cultivation and the refinement in question.

The cultivation of the mind has ever been the chief source of social improvement. And in this respect, what has been, must ever be, for it is impossible to wisely observe laws of which we are entirely ignorant. Education is but an increase of knowledge, and this knowledge, so far as it relates to character, is directly calculated to enforce obedience to the rules of virtue. There is something ennobling and purifying in knowledge; its effect in this particular has always been remarked by the discerning, but the secret of its influence is unknown to many. With them it is a matter of astonishment that the ignorant should be so reckless. And yet, what else ought we to expect? It is even wonderful that unenlightened minds are not more reckless and guilty than they are. A man who walks in the dark can scarcely avoid stumbling; it would be almost a miracle if he should meet with no ob-

struction. The same is true of the benighted mind:—its preservation from vice can scarcely be expected. As knowledge is thus important to the very rudiments of virtue, so also is it indispensable to that higher degree of moral excellence which I designate by the term refinement.

Manners are the index of character, and where we see no propriety in the one, we are authorized to conclude there is no virtue in the other. By educating woman, we impart to her a full knowledge of her own relations to the world. She is thenceforth able to adapt herself to whatever circumstances may surround her. And if she is honest at heart, her course will be one of suspicionless virtue. Knowing precisely what responsibilities she bears, and to what temptations she is exposed, all ensnarement is prevented, except by her own full consent. It is not given to mortals to have a virtue that needs no guarding, and a knowledge of this fact will inspire her with unceasing vigilance.

The vast influence of knowledge upon character, is seldom fully estimated. It not only

imparts the essential elements of virtue, but those heightened and finished forms which we are accustomed to admire in the most celebrated worthies. If they excelled in deeds of renown, it was through a more perfect comprehension of things—some deeper insight, some weightier reason determined their course, and made their conduct conspicuous. Had it not been for this revealing of what is unperceived by the masses, they would have remained undistinguished, however blessed with capacity. Now it is this clear perception that elevates woman above the vices to which she is exposed, and blends in her life all the charms of modesty and prudence. The virtues and graces belong to her naturally, to a certain extent, but in civilized, and especially in christianized society, they require to be greatly improved. Science and religion have displayed the reason of things more fully than is known by merely following the impulses of nature. By the light thus reflected upon her mind, the female comprehends at a glance all the proprieties of life; she sees her place so clearly as never innocently to mistake.

As the culture of the mind goes on, the

roughness and the carelessness peculiar to the uneducated disappear amid the growing evidences of intelligent perception. The character soon acquires such abundant materials of self-respect, and of honorable gratification, as to lose all relish for the low pleasures of vice. Conscience also asserts its authority, and what the senses might not have withstood, the moral faculty unhesitatingly rejects. In a word, if woman is eminently pure, it will be the effect of an equal and a skillful cultivation of all her powers; the various elements of her being must be profoundly stirred, in order to distinguished excellence. The use of education is to give this intensity and compass to human powers, and still preserve their characteristic delicacy. In place of vague desire, and gloomy uncertainty, is substituted a true knowledge of things. Hence, mere instinctive yearnings are veiled with salutary manners, as the form of the body is with clothes. Neither the ravings of fanaticism, nor the stupidity of ignorance, are compatible with the harmonious and vigorous action of intelligent beings. It has always been observed that learning abates disordered

action, and it is equally true that it removes inaction—it stimulates the active powers, while at the same time it controls them.

Female indelicacy is a thing not to be endured. We expect in woman a tenderness and a susceptibility of feeling which require no special prompting. If she is not discreet and inflexible, we turn from her with disgust. But it is asking too much, when we exact of her so severely, without first having given her ample opportunities for correctly appreciating her obligations. An enlightened mind would enable her very naturally to meet every reasonable expectation ; she would comprehend more clearly than others, the limits and the reasons of at least her own virtue. I do not mean to assert that there can be no virtue where there is no education, taking this latter term in its ordinary acceptation. Strictly considered, all persons have education, and in many respects the education obtained out of the schools is by far the most valuable. For instance, the early training of a daughter by a mother may do more to form her character than can be done by literature ; and yet, in the now generally ed-

educated condition of society, the woman who has no other than this domestic instruction, is in danger of ruin. The first and most important lessons have been imparted, but for want of the rest she must appear to great disadvantage, and may finally be circumvented by the destroyer. Nor do we advocate literary education as a substitute for different attainments, whether made at an earlier or a later period. It cannot supply the body of morality, though it can give to that body greater efficiency, as well as greater security.

SECTION VIII.

DOCILITY.

NONE are so ready to learn as the most learned. This arises, both from the habit of learning which has been formed by long study, and from a knowledge of the possibility of improvement. As we advance from truth to truth, there arises a love of knowledge, and to such persons further advancement is always gratify-

ing. The acquisition of knowledge thus becomes a passion, and the indulgence of this passion has led to all those extended collections of truths, which we denominate science. This love of knowledge is a sure indication, as well as an essential condition, of mental proficiency. No woman is capable of effecting the highest purposes of her being, unless deeply imbued with the love of science. Under its inspiration she is prepared fearlessly to grapple with every difficulty in the way of improvement, and willingly offers herself a sacrifice for the general good. No principles, no truths necessary to human happiness, can be overlooked by her philanthropic zeal. She is fitted to be the champion of her own sex, instead of being the meek protégé of her lord—man. Woman would be equal to the renovation of her character and circumstances, if the spell which has hitherto been upon her powers could only be broken.

Not to insist upon possible advantages that might arise were females to take a stand in proportion to their capacity, I proceed to notice a painful, but scarcely blamable trait of uneducated mind. Ignorant people, to use an ex-

pressive colloquial phrase, are very much *set in their way*. They exhibit, on many occasions, a want of docility not easily accounted for, and very troublesome to such as have been blessed with better opportunities. No degree of learning will be likely wholly to extirpate this reluctance to the admission of facts contrary to received opinions; nor is it desirable, for, like the fear of death, it exerts a restraining influence which keeps the mind in its proper sphere, and thus prevents the waste of its powers. If ladies never had to do with persons and things requiring deep knowledge, this backwardness to be taught would be less detrimental to themselves and to others. But when in the course of life they are connected with those who know more than themselves, and whose best interests are identified with strict attention to the principles of science, then it is that this reluctance disqualifies them for their station. It is then that the husband pities his wife, and laments for himself. To correct the evil is perhaps beyond his power, and there remains to him only the endurance, for the balance of life, of the evils of ignorance inflicted on him by one who, least

of all, could consciously injure him. "What communion has light with darkness?" Where the husband has been equally neglected, no such inconvenience will be felt, and mutual ignorance may be regarded as a blessing. A little foresight would enable the flaunting *belle* to see the awkwardness of her position. Let her be placed in alliance with a man of science, and she must either submit to be catechized on disputed points, or endure the mortification of an obstinate attachment to principles which she is not able to defend. Were it possible for her to feel the need of such instruction, she is too conscious that the most suitable time for its acquisition is past, and a paroxysm of ill-nature usually follows convictions of ignorance after marriage.

Never can the domestic circle be what it should be, never can females share in the high intellectual aspirations for which their minds, no less than those of the other sex, are fitted, till by actual cultivation the desire of improvement becomes paramount. When this change occurs—and occur it must, whenever the powers of the mind are fully brought into exer-

cise—they will be as ready to receive instruction as others ; nor will they fail to glean from every available source those lessons of wisdom which are so eagerly sought by all those who have once tasted the sweets of knowledge.

SECTION IX.

INDEPENDENCE.

MUCH depends upon the estimate people form of themselves, and where there is an admitted incapacity or a consciousness of inferiority in attainments, we shall look in vain for independence of character. Such persons live by sufferance, and having long been suffered to live, they at last come to bow obsequiously to every degree of oppression ; thankful for what they receive, and shamefully regardless of their original rights. This has long been the condition of woman. Scanted in her education till even the love of science is obliterated, she has entered upon the active stage of life as a passive thing, to be dealt with as circumstances might deter-

mine, and not as propriety might require. With no felt ability to shape her own destiny, and too reverent towards established usages to think of calling in question their correctness, she has been outraged at every point, and yet without complaint. It was what she expected, if she expected anything, for it was what had been sedulously inculcated. She was not to think of possessing and exercising the attributes of an independent mind. Submission has thus far been the highest principle of female education. And it is the only principle which can consist with that half-enslaved condition to which the customs of society have reduced the sex.

Educated beings cannot be moulded at will ; every right would not be tamely relinquished if a large amount of passivity did not preclude, all resistance. The spoiler is supplied with material, the nature of which he well understands. Woman is delivered to his clutches, not with the least expectation that she will assert a positive existence and stand aloof from ruin ; to her, acquiescence is the acme of attainments. True, there is an utter prostration of

moral character to which she could not submit with public approbation ; but this last step is often the least criminal. The barriers of virtue are broken down, long antecedent to the final destruction of character. Here is the secret of her repeated and irrevocable misfortunes. She resists, but not till resistance can do no good. The previous acts of compliance had all been performed under the direction of authority, and their performance had secured perhaps applause ; the last sad step, however, is only one more in the same direction, and should by no means be considered more guilty than those which preceded it.

By duly educating ladies we give them at least an equal chance of virtue. They are not blinded and left to be the prey of such as have eyes. Added to this, is the enhanced pleasure flowing from intelligent companionship. The lacquey, the parasite, and the imbecile, are always disgusting. It is impossible to make woman such a helpmeet as she ought to be, unless we raise her above the necessity of mean compliance. Her amiability depends in no small degree on the idea of unsullied purity,

but unsullied purity cannot be allied to abject dependence. It becomes necessary, therefore, to educate the female mind, if we would shield it from contempt.

How important independence is to the pursuits of life, all know who have any acquaintance with the degraded classes of society. We have already shown (Section I. of this chapter,) the advantage which the educated have over the uneducated. Illustrative cases are numerous enough if they were needed. I will adduce but one: the mechanic who understands his trade can certainly excel one who either has no knowledge of the business or is only superficially acquainted with it. Such is the condition of woman, destitute of education. Others have a knowledge that she has not, and therefore excel her—she falls into the class of servants, simply for the want of knowledge to qualify her for a higher station. Had she the independence arising from intellectual equality, her degradation would be voluntary, if at all, and not, as now, constrained.

SECTION X.

NEW SOURCES OF EMPLOYMENT.

AT the present day, the sphere of female industry is so contracted that many are reduced to helpless indigence, and all are subjected to mortifying dependence. This precariousness of livelihood is common to a certain class of individuals, whether male or female, in every state of society; there are always some who cannot live, not because there is no chance to live, but simply and solely because they are devoid of economy. But the misfortune, if such it be, in relation to these persons, is not attributable to a bad system of domestic policy; it is the result of their own defective habits, for which society at large is not to blame, and which it has no means of preventing. No one need confound the poverty now mentioned with that which results purely from inadequate opportunities to acquire a living. In the one instance, the fault is natural; in the other, it is to be ascribed to conventional usage. It has not been the custom to allow women any of the lucrative employ-

ments of life. A menial office and a menial compensation have circumscribed her activities. Wealth is therefore out of the question, so far as female industry is concerned. Such a thing as a lady becoming rich by her own toil and skill is unprecedented; it is what no one expects, or ought to expect, under present circumstances. It is quite sufficient if a woman avoid abject poverty. With no wages, in most instances, beyond a few shillings per week, it is scarcely possible for her to do more than live, and too often she cannot do even that.

This oppression extends to all the race—it is not the degraded and the uneducated alone who are thus cut off from the means of support. A caste has been formed, and no female may exceed the limits prescribed, but under penalty of the public's high displeasure. To submit is ruin; not to submit is greater ruin. Now the unjust relations of social life, which, in this and other instances, bear so disproportionately heavy upon the weaker sex, are not to be corrected without education. If we enlighten the mind till it appreciates its own powers and discovers its relation to surrounding

objects, we need do little more to ensure the desired emancipation.

By equal education, woman will be fitted for equal pecuniary efforts. The professions, the arts, the business of the world, will, in a very considerable degree, open themselves to her, and she may share, with her brother, the opportunities for gain which have hitherto been monopolized by him, but which, from the weakness of her physical system, she ought at least to be permitted to share. It is necessary that she should have the usual motives to activity, or in other words, that her learning, when once acquired, should meet a pre-existing demand. We never can educate woman till something is to be gained by education. There must be places open to her, for which she can only be fitted by education, or one of the strongest inducements to study is taken away. If in ignorance she can answer all the purposes of her being, and all the demands of society, it is not probable that she will ordinarily take pains to cultivate her mind. This fuller and more generous participation in the business of life is absolutely essential to proficiency, except in those

rare cases where genius supersedes both the usual motives and the usual means.

I may further say that the slightest respect for females would dictate the propriety of according to them a full proportion of opportunities for gaining a support. Our social manners must be very superficial indeed, if they can carry us no farther than merely complimentary politeness. We give precedence to ladies on all occasions of ceremony, and this is well, for they are entitled to such distinction, because they are less able to endure hardships. Were they physically equal to man, his kind offices would be superfluous. But as we take them under our supervision, and make them the object of ceremonial condescension, it is strangely absurd in us to oppress them in matters of more consequence. It is right to give the ladies the first place where nothing but form is concerned, and yet how dastardly to do this, and at the same time reduce them to virtual slavery, by excluding them from all the lucrative positions in society! We give them the best seats at church on Sunday, but brutally turn them off to starve at some thriftless

employment during the week. Magnanimity would suggest that they should be allowed at least to compete for a living—if courtesy must end in empty form, let there be no essential unkindness.

In the mean time education will enable them to do for themselves. Whatever advantages learning gives to one sex, it will give to the other also. Make the intellectual condition of women such as it ought to be, and this of itself will restore an equilibrium to the practical movement, now so greatly deranged. In what, or how far they would be affected by such a change, we are unable to say; and there is little need of determining, since the matter may be safely left to its own direction.

SECTION XI.

CONTENTMENT.

EDUCATION not only regulates the desires, and represses fondness for display, but it reconciles those who have it to their lot in life. As the

station of females in society is subordinate in some respects, they are under peculiar temptations to a species of murmuring. When the cares of a family or reverses of fortune give increased weight to their trials, this spirit of complaining is often seriously troublesome. Nothing short of improving both the mind and the heart can remedy the evil. Let the female see things as they are, let her survey the world somewhat at large, instead of revolving the contracted notions of a mind chained down by ignorance, and she will support herself under trials with all the dignity of intelligence and virtue. It is the province of woman to soothe afflictions, but how can she be a minister of consolation to others, if the equanimity of her own mind is disturbed? Knowledge gives importance to things that ignorance sees, if it sees them at all, as unimportant. The reason of much of the dissatisfaction which people manifest with their respective positions or employments, is no other than an idea that they are living below their privileges. They seem to think their present station not the one for which they were made. But a correct knowledge of the

relations of life dissipates all uneasiness, by showing that what we deemed as inferior is just as essential as what we called great. All discontent must vanish in the presence of light, or stand convicted of impiety. Our places have been assigned by an unerring hand, and to leave them, were it possible, would be no less ruinous than foolish.

“What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head ?
What if the head, the eye, or ear, repined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind ?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another in this general frame ;
Just as absurd to mourn the task or pains
The great directing Mind of all ordains.” *

We shall never find woman contented with her lot in life till she takes this comprehensive view of her position, and of the wisdom that ordained it. She will think the duties of her sphere are not the duties most useful, because they are not the most striking. She will sigh for romantic labors, and pine for more ennobling and chivalrous enterprises. Life's dull monot-

* Essay on Man, b. iv.

ony will be an insupportable burden to such ignorant sentimentalism. If she does not utterly refuse all participation in the plain, unvarnished toils of ordinary life, her submission to such duties will be marked by reluctance, as if there was something unnecessarily oppressive in them. Here is undeniably the cause of numerous evils inflicted on society. The rage for dissipation, the reckless extravagance, the eagerness for change, and the aspiration for superficial acquirements and distinctions, so characteristic of many, are but indications of an impatience peculiar to ignorance. An acquaintance with profounder truths would allay this solicitude, without subtracting anything from the delicacy of the female character, or diminishing in the least what is necessary by way of accomplishments. It would induce a graceful submission to the order of nature and of Providence, it would remove the idea of vassalage, and make duties, hitherto deemed insignificant, appear in all their intrinsic greatness. Instead of longings for an unnatural and impracticable career, there would be a cheerful

acquiescence in the course evidently assigned by the Creator.

This deep, philosophical, and truly religious estimate of her condition cannot be made by the female mind in an uncultivated state. Education must shed its light upon the facts which concern her, before she can appreciate them. Every human heart has its promptings to greatness; there is a latent, if not a visible, passion for the heroic. The mind of woman is no exception here. She has, and ought to have, a holy ambition to rise. We cannot deprive her of this all-important element of mind—aspire she will, as long as her nature is human. Our object is, then, to regulate, without in any measure repressing, this legitimate desire of improvement. Few are so ignorant as not to know how vital this desire is to the best hopes of the race. But for a restless and often undefinable anxiety to be what we are not, we should soon relinquish all attempts to better our condition. Religion does but control this native impulse; it acts with even greater force under the guidance of religious truth. To the female must be furnished the means of consist-

ent gratification; the passion for excellence is a part of her being which cannot be eradicated, nor can its demands be safely disregarded. Misguidance produces that prostitution of the faculties—that waste of noble powers upon trivialities, vices, or fancies—to which we have just referred. By neglect, we compel the instinctive movements of the soul to take a wrong direction, and thus become a curse instead of a blessing.

The duties of woman may and ought to appear noble to her, and though shut out from what constitutes the most attractive and exciting pursuits of the other sex, she need have no cause to regret her fate. In moral and intellectual enterprises—the grandest possible to mankind—she has equal privileges, and may compete freely with the most gifted. She is reserved to higher honors and to more important conflicts than those of “the ensanguined plain.” On this subject, the following lines from Dr. Young are quite to the point. They occur in “Resignation,” a poem addressed to the widow of Admiral Boscawen:—

“Nor, Madam! be surprised to hear,
That laurels may be due

Not more to heroes of the field
(Proud boasters!) than to you.

Tender as is the female frame,
Like that brave man you mourn,
You are a soldier, and to fight
Superior battles born.

Beneath a banner nobler far
Than ever was unfurled
In fields of blood; a banner bright!
High-waved o'er all the world;

It, like a streaming meteor, casts
An universal light;
Sheds day, sheds more, eternal day,
On nations whelmed in night.

The billows stained by slaughtered foes
Inferior praise afford;
Reason 's a bloodless conqueror
More glorious than the sword.

Nor can the thunder of huzzas
From shouting nations, cause
Such sweet delight, as from your heart
Soft whispers of applause."

Woman may freely engage in all the truly
glorious conflicts of the age. The gospel de-

volves upon her a full share in the highest reformatory movement that ever invited human exertion. Here is ample scope for the employment of her powers, whatever may be their relative grade or peculiarities. And it is not possible that she should feel herself degraded by the part assigned in this holiest and noblest of works.

As for those who suppose that marriage is to introduce them to an earthly paradise, in which there shall be unalloyed bliss, or who look down contemptuously upon the duties of their station, they are the victims of an imbecility induced by much more than common ignorance. Nature, without literary education, should suffice to correct so gross an error.

SECTION XII.

INSTITUTIONS FOR FEMALE EDUCATION

It must be set down as a fact, much to the discredit of our age, that female education has hitherto been conducted in a very unequal

manner. It has not been commensurate with the wants of the female mind, nor with that standard of cultivation deemed necessary for males. We need be at no loss for the cause of this strange discrimination. On woman has fallen the reproach of inferiority, and she is fated to struggle with an almost predestinated degradation. Even christian men seem scarcely to admit that she can ever rise to equality. They too often forget that in the world to come, human beings are to be "as the angels of God," and that all sexual distinctions are to end with this life. Hence, in the institutions to which Christianity has given rise, there is as yet no sufficient effort to raise the female character. We have done something—the genius of the gospel is too powerfully equalizing to allow of woman's remaining in the abject condition peculiar to paganism; but we have not extended to her the care which her high destiny, as indicated by Christianity, demands.

Our colleges are exclusive. We have latterly, it is true, originated female colleges; but this, besides being no adequate provision, is painfully significant of the general sentiment—that

females are unfitted to share the usual collegiate advantages. If there is a common want and a common fitness for education, why exclude them from the common opportunities? Nothing of the kind occurs in our primary schools or academies, and it is therefore fair to infer that their exclusion from colleges has its origin in an impression that such advantages are unsuitable. That the mingling of male and female in these higher institutions would be more unsafe than it is in schools of a lower grade, no one will pretend, unless influenced by preconceived opinion. Prejudice would no doubt say that such an arrangement must be disastrous; but let it be recollected that this same prejudice, not long since, thought all education dangerous to the masses. Experience has shown the folly of such narrow views, and experience will ultimately show the folly of our present course.

At least it is absurd to pursue this monastic system of education; and where the advantages are all reserved for one sex, the evil is worse than popish superstition; for that erred only in separating the sexes, and not in an unequal distribution of privileges. If we do not wish to

refine upon popish cruelty, we shall immediately throw open our colleges to females. From the common school to the University, there must be the same unrestricted freedom of access, and the same cordial endeavor to facilitate the highest possible improvement. At present, no female school has any state patronage. All efforts for their collegiate education have been sustained by private munificence, while colleges for men have always been, to greater or less extent, endowed by the state. This is mentioned, not as a matter of complaint—for private liberality is able to effect whatever is deemed indispensable—but to show the exceedingly lax principles which have prevailed on this subject. The applications for aid to literary institutions have been numerous and urgent; yet not a dollar have the representatives of the people voted to sustain any female institution. Thousands, and even millions, have been generously bestowed for the benefit of our sons, but nothing for our daughters. Such is the treatment inflicted by chivalrous men on the beings whose best interests are confided to their generosity. The man who would stand up all day to afford a

lady a seat, or who would hazard his life in a moment to afford her protection, is thus unwittingly made the instrument of her ruin. It is time for legislation to assume a different aspect. This old, one-sided, exclusive method of providing for humanity, should give place to a more enlightened policy. The rights of woman are not a theme for derision. Those who sneer at this subject, or who introduce parsimonious advantages as the full measure of woman's claims, are themselves most derisively employed. They are vainly endeavoring to circumscribe the ample designs of Heaven within the contracted precincts of their own benighted prejudices. They might as well spend their strength in reviving the subtle dialectics of the schoolmen, or weary themselves with the wild schemes of the alchemists. An age of light has arrived, and our educational movements must be amended by the light, or deservedly sink into contempt. A blind, infatuated adherence to the past, can only produce disgust, and end in the loss of all confidence in our social institutions.

Should our colleges be made accessible to ladies, this single arrangement would at once

bring things to their true position. The balance, now destroyed, would be restored, and all other intellectual privileges follow as a matter of course. That odious caste, which has blighted every attempt at development, would vanish in the absence of frowning, disproportionate legislation. Take away the barriers which custom, rather than law, has thrown before the progress of reform, and woman will no more be reproached as an imbecile, nor as one that chooses to waste her powers in frivolous pursuits.

A new period has arrived, in which the rights of mankind are no longer viewed as a matter of speculation. The element of humanity gives other privileges as well as the right to life. We have in former years made scarcely any other difference between some portions of the human race and the brutes, than this, of barely protecting their lives in some degree. Brutes are left to be slaughtered at the owner's option, but even among slaveholders, man, though a mere chattel—as much so as an ox or a horse—is not to be killed with impunity. The right to life is recognized. The claim which thus survives amid the lowest degradation, is founded in the

nature of man, and must, in a well-regulated community, draw after it every other privilege belonging to the race. The advance of female education is, therefore, only an effect of that general intellectual progress which characterizes the present age. Were we more ignorant, the rights of woman would be thrown back in proportion to that ignorance, as physical force always preponderates in the absence of knowledge. Among barbarians, women are treated as human, because they are indispensable; but among the enlightened, they are treated as equals, because they are human. Humanity gives an indefeasible title to all the blessings of humanity. It is arrogant, it is unjust, to claim more than an equal share of these blessings, especially so, to monopolize them until one class—and that the weaker one physically—is reduced to the single common privilege of dying a natural death. Education, however extensive, is the right of all, and of one as much as of another.

CHAPTER V.

Physical Education.

THIS part of our subject is comprised in two general divisions : first, the development of the physical system and the preservation of health ; secondly, the restoration of health or the cure of disease. But the two departments are so interwoven with each other, that we shall not attempt to discuss them separately. The purpose which we have in view will be best served by surveying some of the relations of woman, and the demand created by those relations for the comprehensive physical education now specified.

SECTION I.

WOMAN A PHYSICAL BEING.

WOMAN has a physical nature, and it would

be strange if the laws of physical nature did not prevail over her. She is not the sylph-like thing so commonly imagined, but a veritable creature of flesh and blood, having all the wants and all the weaknesses peculiar to the male part of our species. Fancy may paint her as an angel, partaking more of the spiritual than of the material ; education may treat her as a plaything destined to no share in the sober realities of life ; and her own inexperienced imagination—rendered half delirious by flattery—may confirm the delusion for a time, yet must the course of things very soon dispel all such false notions. Provision should therefore be made for the actual necessities of one who cannot, in obedience to the perverted notions of brainless admirers, or mistaken educators, quite change the condition of her existence.

One of the first duties of every human being is, to secure, as far as practicable, the health of the body. Disease is next door to death. Without health, almost every avenue to happiness is closed ; life is rendered a scene of inactivity and suffering, without the power to do good or to enjoy the gifts of providence. We do not

pretend that a knowledge of the physical system would invariably banish all bodily ailments. There is no need of extravagance in our expectations at this point, as the real, though limited advantages of such knowledge are not only too well known to admit of dispute, but too obvious to be misapprehended.

By the study of physiology, females will secure to themselves the ability to judge correctly of their own wants. Instead of pursuing a course destructive to health, they will be aware of the tendency of what is injurious, and abandon it without the need of instruction or entreaty. It may be thought by some that fashion prevails over the better judgment, in cases where health is sacrificed by an obvious neglect of the laws of our physical existence; but I am of the opinion that fashion has comparatively little to do with this alarming waste of life; and that it is an evil arising from an unfurnished state of mind, or from ignorance of natural science. One custom which prevails among females demonstrates their ignorance of physiology. Allusion is had, of course, to tight-lacing. The small waists of America, and the small feet of

China, have one common origin, in the profound depths of ignorance. The difference is merely a matter of taste. My remarks are excusatory rather than criminative; hence no attempt will be made to declaim against the absurdities of this practice. The reference is one of illustration solely; for I am convinced that mention of this vice for any other purpose tends to make matters worse, instead of better. Physicians and philanthropists may expatiate on the madness of this suicidal custom—may demonstrate that its inseparable attendants are pain and death; but all to no purpose. Ignorance forbids that they should know these things. And until the laws of the human mind are changed, it must be so; for the bare *ipse dixit*, even of love and knowledge, cannot be received. The wisdom of medical and other advisers may not be doubted; their kind intentions certainly not; but the subjects of this advice fail to trace the concatenation of facts on which such conclusions rest. Hence they have only the force of abstractions, supported merely by authority, and are deservedly rejected from among the number of governing principles. But let the sub-

ject of an unnatural compression of the chest, come up free from this embarrassment, and we shall find the female intellect, in all ordinary instances, yielding a hearty and prompt obedience to the dictates of science. To the cultured mind the facts appear in their own demonstrative character, and all persuasion is rendered unnecessary by the irresistible force of truth itself. Providence has happily made the instinct of self-preservation strong enough to repel a danger so obvious and inexcusable.

It is with some regret that we find Mrs. Phelps, from whom we have quoted with approbation in a former chapter, endeavoring to extenuate the guilt of this abominable practice. "It is popular," says she, "to rail against corsets; all the evils which arise from neglect of physical education and too great excitement of the brain, and from the prevailing bad habits which fashion and refinement have introduced, all are attributed to that dreadful instrument of torture, the corset. It is true that many have suffered from the improper use of corsets; it is also true that many houses have been burnt through the use of fire; but in the first

case, the evil must be voluntary and self-inflicted,—in the second, it may occur wholly by accident; therefore all the arguments, with additional ones, may be urged against the use of fire in our dwellings, which may be brought to bear against corsets.”*

Such reasoning is too fallacious to require an answer. The very terms of the argument are an absurdity; we cannot talk of the abuse of abuse. Lacing, whether tight or otherwise, is a palpable violation of the laws of health, and must so be regarded by all who are acquainted with the structure of the human body. As a physiological fact, it is none too strongly characterized in the following extract from a distinguished physician of the present day: “Will the reader believe that the barbarous corset, that instrument of cruelty and ignorance that would put a flathead Indian to the blush, is sometimes applied to children of eight years, by American mothers? Alas! it is too true, and the law for preventing cruelty to animals is not enforced.”†

* The Female Student, p. 89.

† Dr. E. H. Dixon, Diseases of Sexual System, p. 239.

Under the head of *domestic management*, a long list of grievances might be enumerated. The lady who has been brought up to compress her waist, and who thinks it right to do so, cannot be supposed to have a knowledge of what is requisite for the clothes of the rest of the family. The young and flexible child must be shaped to its clothes. Stubborn, indeed, are the laws of nature. But an expanded chest is quite too vulgar: its ossifying frame-work must therefore be taught to grow, not as God would have it, but as capricious ignorance will permit. Here, too, we usually blame the woman, when she does but as she was taught. She may be entitled to our pity, but scarcely to our censure. What does she know of the structure of the being she is modeling, or of the operation of the vital functions of its body? Has she ever been schooled in facts of this kind? If not, the counsels of prudence will have the appearance of dogmatism; and folly and cruelty will characterize the attempt to induce practical attention to what, under other circumstances, would have been cheerfully obeyed for its own sake.

The true remedy for evils of this kind lies in a clear perception of the injuries necessarily inflicted on the physical system by such treatment. The gentle and humane disposition of woman is wholly incapable of committing these atrocities, unless under the delusion of ignorance. It behooves us, therefore, to insist upon her being early and thoroughly imbued with the principles of physiology, thus ensuring a cheerful and voluntary rejection of practices which custom has hitherto kept in vogue among the ignorant, and among them only.

How far that moral obliquity common to our nature may be chargeable, in particular cases, with the guilt of corset-wearing, we do not presume to say ; but the almost total ignorance of physiology, which so generally prevails among females, sufficiently exculpates them, as a class, from the imputation of intentional wrong. The drunkard, having broken down his moral nature and lost control of himself, may continue to drink in spite of obvious ruin ; in such a case appetite assumes the mastery, and the individual falls a prey to helplessness, superinduced by his own folly. But people generally are

not thus under the dominion of appetite, and consequently cannot be induced to destroy themselves when the danger of a given course is fully apparent. For the same reason, whatever a devotee of fashion may do by way of conscious self-immolation on the altar of fashion, or in other words, of physiological abuse, the sober and uncorrupted portion of society will take a better course.

These remarks relate mostly to a single evil ; but woman, as a physical being, demands much more than the limited knowledge which would correct a solitary error. She wants that enlarged acquaintance with the human system which is necessary to its judicious management under all the varied circumstances of life. We might remove the corsets, without enlightening the mind touching the other claims of our physical nature, and we should but lop off one of a thousand branches of this Upas—ignorance ; so also, we might teach the art of preserving health, and yet leave the individual to perish, for want of some knowledge of the means of curing disease. Hence it is most evident that females require nothing

short of an ample and extended knowledge of the human system, whether that knowledge relates to the preservation or the restoration of health. They need PHYSICAL EDUCATION, and that, too, in the most comprehensive meaning of these terms.

It is not proposed to extend, to all females, any more than to all males, a full knowledge of medical science ; for however desirable such attainments might be, if they had leisure to secure them, it is certain that the majority of both sexes must always be too much occupied with other pursuits to afford time for those minute details which belong properly to professional life. All women may not be professional physicians, yet all should have at least a general knowledge of medicine. "Females," says Mrs. Phelps, "have much need of some medical knowledge, both with reference to their individual maladies, and the diseases of those around them ; and though accustomed, as most of you are, to be watched over and administered unto, you can now have little conception of the changes which will take place, yet the time may soon arrive when it will become your

turn to watch and minister to others. Every woman ought to understand the elements and composition of the remedies provided for her, or by her administered to others. Without a knowledge of Chemistry she cannot be made to comprehend this, but, with it, she holds a key that will unlock the mysteries with which ignorant physicians have sought to envelope the healing art.”*

Dr. Alcott, well known as one of the ablest and most useful writers of the age, treats this subject very happily in his last work—“Letters to a Sister,”—just now from the press. “In any event, I hope you will no longer hesitate to make yourself acquainted with the laws of your physical frame. By this I do not mean, of course, that it is needful for you to study Anatomy and Physiology with the same earnestness, and to the same extent, which is necessary for the physician and surgeon. All young women are not called to practice medicine, like Miss Blackwell. But a general knowledge of the subject is certainly useful, and if you would fulfill your mission

* Lectures to Young Ladies.

in the best possible manner, quite indispensable. There is, however, a range of study which comes short of this; and yet answers, very well, the purposes of young women. It is what the French call Hygiene—and for which we have no English name, in any one word. It is a proper consideration of the laws of *relation*. Anatomy teaches structure, Physiology, laws; but Hygiene, relations. Thus man is related to air, temperature, food, drink, and clothing; and, by means of bones and muscles, to the earth we tread on, &c.; and this relation involves certain conditions or laws of relation. In pursuing this study, it will indeed be necessary to appeal to the laws of Anatomy and Physiology, and consequently to explain them occasionally. But it is not necessary, in the study of Hygiene, by young women, to *begin* with Anatomy and Physiology, any more than it is necessary to commit to memory a long catalogue of dry grammar or arithmetic rules, before we proceed to parsing or ciphering. This study of Hygiene, I recommend to you most earnestly, not so much because it is becoming fashionable, as because

it is for your life—the life of the body and the life of the soul.”*

There are a great many considerations which render the study of medicine by every individual, and by females particularly, essential to the happiness of society. Some of these we shall name:—

1. Medicine is just as much within the reach of people generally as any other science whatever. There is not a science taught in our common schools that requires less intellectual power. We do not mean by this that medicine is inferior to other sciences, but simply that it is not superior to them—on the same level. Hence it is quite as available as the common acquisitions of knowledge.

2. An almost total ignorance on this subject having long pervaded the public mind, physicians have had too much power over the lives and morals of community. People have been helpless, in consequence of their ignorance, and in this helplessness, they have suffered greatly by the encroachments of the medical profession.

* Letters to a Sister, p. 50.

3. To the physician, medicine is only a means of livelihood ; he has no interest in the profession beyond its pecuniary advantages. But the community have a vastly higher concern in the results of medical practice. To the physician, the practice of his art is a fee, but to his patient, it is life or death. This difference is of itself quite sufficient to show how greatly each person is interested in the science of medicine, and how comparatively trifling are mere professional interests. And yet physicians have not unfrequently discouraged the study of medicine by the populace ; they have wrung many changes on the dangers of quackery, and of tampering with medicine. The true reason of such caution is, the craft is in danger ; if medical knowledge were to become common, the profits of practitioners would cease, and certain pernicious, immoral abuses would be corrected. The fear of exposure has led to the cry of danger ; a wish to perpetuate the helplessness of ignorance, in order to secure an easier prey, has mainly if not wholly induced the desire for darkness.

Doubtless many evils accrue from an injudi-

cious use of medical knowledge, and those who are superficial in such knowledge may be peculiarly liable to inflict evils of this kind, but there is not the slightest necessity for such abuses. In every other branch of knowledge there is the same liability to injury from limited acquirements, and yet we are far from discouraging partial study because the individual has not an opportunity to push his inquiries to perfection. Although in some instances

“A little learning is a dangerous thing;”

yet the evil is easily avoided, and the good is very great.

We have no idea that all physicians would wish to keep the public ignorant for the sake of protecting the profession, but the fact that they so generally disapprove of all attempts to study medicine, except by the profession, shows that they greatly overrate the mischiefs of popular instruction. It is idle to fear the effects of knowledge. Popular intelligence has never been otherwise than a blessing, and in

vain do we plead for ignorance as the conservative element of public health.

4. That all have an equal right to this knowledge, as well as an equal capacity for its acquirement, no one can dispute. Mankind are always exposed to disease and death, and the knowledge which tends to avert or to mitigate these evils, is their inalienable birthright. It cannot belong to a profession—it can never be monopolized. Physicians may practice medicine, and may excel in medical knowledge; but the proprietorship of such science must always be with the people.

5. The preservation of health, being a duty enjoined by the Creator, cannot be transferred to others.

For this reason alone, if all other motives were wanting, we should be compelled to investigate the laws of our physical nature. We must guard the life entrusted to our care, or incur the guilt of self-destruction.

6. Without medical knowledge, we lose all confidence in physicians. We have not the ability to appreciate their skill, or to second their exertions. Those who know most of the

science, will have most willingness to avail themselves of its advantages. Dr. Rush supposed the preference so generally evinced by ignorant people for quacks and quack nostrums, originated in a disease of the mind. In this, however, he was mistaken, for the preference given to the worthless pretender is only the natural effect of ignorance. The good and the bad are confounded, and solely for want of discrimination the latter is preferred to the former.

7. If knowledge is power, ignorance must be weakness. The truth of this is seen whenever disease attacks the ignorant. They may have knowledge of other subjects, but being unacquainted with the physical system, they lie at the mercy of the veriest pretender of medical science. When all is at stake, and nothing but the grave and its dreary associations appear before them, they find themselves reduced to the helplessness of infancy. When the very citadel of life is assailed, they find all at once that they have no means of defence. This fearful exposure can only be met by calling in the aid of physicians, and that it is often

met successfully in this way we admit, but is it creditable or safe for rational beings to allow themselves to be reduced to such extremities? Sickness we cannot avoid, yet the imbecility which grows out of this ignorance of therapeutics may easily be avoided. And so great is the hazard, that no argument is necessary to show the propriety of at least ordinary prudential considerations in the shape of medical education. Let those who are invulnerable to disease despise such precaution; but to all others it will prove a priceless acquisition.

8. The ability to co-operate with physicians in their remedial efforts, is almost entirely dependent upon some knowledge of the healing art. In every other pursuit where we are obliged to have professional assistance, the advantage of some previous knowledge of what we need, is quite apparent; and the critical operations of surgery and medicine are no exception to this rule.

9. A general knowledge of medicine is often of the highest importance in meeting certain exigencies of disease which do not allow of time to procure the services of a physician.

In case of a sudden attack or of an accident, the individual who is thus furnished, may perhaps save his own life or the life of his friend.

10. Morals are in no inconsiderable degree dependent on the state of health. Many crimes evidently have their origin in a depraved condition of the physical system, and all reformatory processes have more or less relation to the body as well as to the mind. Piety and virtue, therefore, no less than safety, demand the diffusion of medical knowledge.

Such are some of the principal motives to this branch of education, and they are equally applicable to either sex. Although females have a train of ailments peculiar to themselves, yet are they not exempted from such as are common to human nature. They come in for their share of all the nameless catalogue of diseases which, regardless of sex, prey upon flesh and blood. Hence the study of medicine, and of all the cognate branches of science, has to them not only as much importance as it has to men, but an importance greatly augmented by special liabilities to disease.

The uncertainty of medical practice, even in

the best of hands, might be urged as an objection to any attempts on the part of those who do not thoroughly master the profession. But the very terms of the objection contain its own refutation. For if professional skill cannot attain to much exactness, those whose lives are at stake are not to be repelled from medical inquiries on the ground of imperfection. The profession, which have only a fee as an inducement, may more nearly approximate the point of success, but others whose very existence is periled, certainly may be excused both for acquiring and employing such knowledge to the extent of their ability. Females lack not for adaptation to studies of this kind; they have the mental vigor, of which, however, no unusual degree is required, and, beyond all dispute, a preëminent measure of that soothing tenderness, and that suggestive, sympathetic kindness, so beneficial in the sick-room. It seems a refinement in cruelty to incapacitate through ignorance, a nature so devoted to suffering humanity as is that of woman; she is naturally an angel of mercy, and is compelled to indulge her intense benevolence of feeling

without the power to employ the customary means of relief. This torture is wholly inexcusable, for no more time is requisite to a tolerable acquaintance with medicine, than is demanded for the acquisition of any other science. Physicians study, but not more than lawyers or ministers. In all sciences, the rudiments—by far the most important part—are few and easily acquired. Those recondite and technical applications, which astonish the uninitiated, are in reality superficial, when compared with the elementary principles on which they are based.

Instead of committing the care of our health exclusively to physicians, it is to be hoped the day is not remote, in which every individual will have the key of life in his own hand. Men are as able to take care of their health as they are of their property ; and when lost, if restoration be possible, they should feel that the possibility is lodged with themselves, and not with a profession. The law of self-preservation demands that the public should enter far more extensively into the work of supervising their physical condition. We are not to shrink back

appalled at mysteries, or magnitudes, or responsibilities connected with such efforts. No honest man will ever hint, much less openly affirm, that it is better to remain in ignorance of curative processes, and transfer our interests to the keeping of others. We cannot discharge this duty by proxy. People must either learn how to preserve their lives, or else incur the guilt of suicide. It is in vain to admonish them of impertinence, presumption, imbecility, or any other consideration which the desire for professional monopoly might suggest. They who have lives to lose are the ones to take care of life; no hireling influences can be substituted for the intelligent and interested conservatism of self-regulation. The love of life, the fear of death, the knowledge of his own symptoms and circumstances, as well as the not unfrequent pressure of momentous consequences incident to the loss of health, are motives capable of prompting the invalid to much greater exertions than can possibly be put forth by those who only resort to medicine for a livelihood.

These observations are not designed to disparage the medical profession. It is a noble

profession, but it cannot supersede the necessity for individual oversight of health. The physician is only a helper—not a proprietor. He is convenient, rather than indispensable. Each person should be able to manage his own health, and promote his own happiness, in matters of vital importance, without this miserable dependence upon professional assistance. Man should not, by his ignorance, render himself a mere tenant at will of the medical faculty. He has too much interest at stake in the question of health, thus to pass it by. Were it some article of property or of convenience merely, the supervision might be left to others; but an individual's health, which is his life, belongs to himself as it can belong to no other, and has an importance to him which makes him its fittest guardian.

We need not say that the obligation to take care of our health, involves curative as well as merely preservative measures. Perhaps few will deny that part of the duty which relates simply to avoiding occasions of injury, but the correlative part of the obligation—that of restoring health when once impaired—is by most

persons entirely neglected, from a conviction that it belongs exclusively to physicians. All classes have participated in this unlawful transfer of responsibility ; but woman, from her subordinate position, and from a disposition naturally more confiding, has been the greatest sufferer. To regain the vantage-ground which has thus been lost to the sex and to humanity ; to restore both male and female to their true position, or, what is the same, to introduce a system of physical education—is an achievement worthy of the age, and indispensable to human happiness.

SECTION II.

THE HEAD OF A FAMILY.

IN her relations as head of a family, the physical education for which we have contended in the preceding section, is more especially necessary to woman. Her individual errors must, in this case, be a source of ruin to many. If others are injured through her ignorance, she cannot suffer and die for them. Their blighted

hopes must be borne by themselves, and her own sorrows will in the mean time be not a little enhanced by the assurance that she was the direct, though unconscious agent of their miseries. Such bitter pangs have been reserved for many tender maternal hearts—mothers have wept with inexpressible anguish at the remembrance of real cruelties which their ignorance had mistaken for kindnesses. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, and rooms we occupy, may carry death to the physical system, unless under the watchful and intelligent regulation of the mistress of the house. Woman, as the superintendent of domestic affairs, has the guardianship of our lives and our health. She is bound to study not only neatness, economy, and virtue, but humanity. To do this effectually will require considerable knowledge of science. Chemistry, Philosophy, both natural and intellectual, Physiology, and Hygiene, are of great consequence to her in the performance of this work. Many a housekeeper has sapped the foundation of her own health and that of her household, for want of a little knowledge of the constitution of the

atmosphere and of the laws of respiration. How often are rooms left without ventilation, and the inmates compelled to breathe over and over again, the same poisonous gases and putrid, loathsome exhalations! No intelligent female would, for a moment, be guilty of such gross neglect; but one who knows nothing either of the chemical changes which air undergoes in the lungs, or of the relation which it sustains to the animal economy, might very easily commit the error in question. Some knowledge of the laws of nature is indispensable to a proper care of the body. We stand related to matter in all its diversified forms and movements; and the changes which are going on around us,—changes from the effects of which we cannot escape,—ought to be understood in order to our own preservation. Morally, it is no worse to poison with arsenic than with mephitic gases; life is just as innocently taken with any deadly weapon formed expressly for that purpose, as by allowing natural causes to become fatal through our own willful neglect. It would be abhorrent to the feelings of any but a murderer, to assail

the life of a human being, and yet it is done constantly by those who sacrifice comfort to display, and health to fashion. We know there is a difference of intention between the two classes of offences, but a good intention does not avert the consequence of violating a law of nature. We may strike unwittingly, but the blow will have the same effect as if it had been directed by malice. Therefore, the lady who has no design against the life of her friends—who would abhor to mingle poison with the food of her guests or of her family—should be intelligent enough not to do ignorantly what nothing on earth could induce her to do designedly. She ought not to be the blind, unconscious instrument of deeds from which the female heart, when properly enlightened, always instinctively shrinks with horror.

How often, for want of a little knowledge of Physiology, have ladies broken down the constitutions of their children, and thrown them as invalids upon the world, to drag out a wretched existence, or sink into a premature grave! The instances in which life has been

embittered by errors of this kind, are too numerous to need proof, and too obvious to require illustration. Indeed, so prevalent have they been, and so universal the ignorance that caused them, that health has become the exception and disease the rule of society. The possession of a good constitution and a well-developed physical system, must be regarded as an escape from the effects of established usage, and not by any means as the result of such usage. The following, taken from the "Personal Recollections" of the late Mrs. Tonna (Charlotte Elizabeth), is an instance of this kind of escape, and shows that under the worst possible system of training there will be an occasional gleam of common sense :

"One morning, when his daughter was about eight years old, my father came in, and found sundry preparations going on, the chief materials for which were buckram, whalebone, and other stiff articles ; while the young lady was under measurement by the hands of a female friend. 'Pray, what are you going to do to the child ?'

" 'Going to fit her with a pair of stays.'

“‘For what purpose?’

“‘To improve her figure; no young lady can grow up properly without them.’

“‘I beg pardon; young gentlemen grow up very well without them, and so may young ladies.’

“‘Oh, you are mistaken. See what a stoop she has already; depend upon it, this girl will be both a dwarf and a cripple if we don’t put her into stays.’

“‘My child may be a cripple, ma’am, if such is God’s will; but she shall be one of His making, not ours.’

“All remonstrance was in vain; stays and every species of tight dress were strictly prohibited by the authority of one whose will was, as every man’s ought to be, absolute in his own household. He also carefully watched against any invasion of the rule; a ribbon drawn tightly around my waist would have been cut without hesitation by his determined hand; while the little girl of the anxious friend whose operations he had interrupted, enjoyed all the advantages of that system from which I was preserved. She grew up a wand-

like figure, graceful and interesting, and died of decline at nineteen, while I, though not able to compare shapes with a wasp or an hour-glass, yet passed muster very fairly among mere human forms of God's moulding, and I have enjoyed to this hour a rare exemption from headaches and other lady-like maladies, that appear the almost exclusive privilege of women in the higher classes.

“This is no trivial matter, believe me ; it has frequently been the subject of conversation with professional men of high attainment, and I never met with one among them who did not, on hearing that I never but once, and then only for a few hours, submitted to the restraint of these unnatural machines, refer to that exemption, as a means, the free respiration, circulation, and powers both of exertion and endurance with which the Lord has most mercifully gifted me. There can be no doubt that the hand which first encloses the waist of a girl in these cruel contrivances, supplying her with a fictitious support, where the hand of God has placed bones and muscles that ought to be brought into vigorous action,—that

hand lays the foundation of bitter sufferings ; at the price of which, and probably of a premature death, the advantage must be purchased of rendering her figure as unlike as possible to all the models of female beauty, universally admitted to be such, because they are chiseled after nature itself. I have seen pictures, and I have read harrowing descriptions of the murderous consequences of thus flying in the face of the Creator's skill, and presuming to mend—to improve—his perfect work ; but my own experience is worth a thousand treatises and ten thousand illustrations, in bringing conviction to my mind.”

The above is but one of a class of abuses to which every female is exposed. In general, the fashions and customs of society have no regard to health ; the whole system of modern society overlooks with contempt the cardinal duty of self-preservation. We do not wish to intimate that there is any preconceived suicidal purpose, but we must insist that the palpable neglect of physical cultivation is scarcely less criminal. The care everywhere demanded is nowhere bestowed. Not only nursery ar-

rangements, but the whole routine of domestic life and the scenes of amusement as well as the toils of industry, are characterized by a disastrous ignorance. Life is embittered and broken down by an almost total inattention to the laws of physical existence. When disease has actually commenced its work we take the alarm and fly to physicians for relief, and this is the best that can be done under the circumstances; but how much better to anticipate such dangers, and prevent them by cultivating the science of Hygiene! To woman, whose gentle and humane dispositions prompt her to such willing and devoted service of the sick, this knowledge is eminently congenial, and of inestimable value. Thus fortified, she need not confine her benevolence to the mere act of soothing affliction—she need not be restricted to the last stages of human misery, as though it were her peculiar province to tread the margin of the grave and to comfort only those who go down to its repose; but she might boldly dispute the progress of evil at its commencement, and set her foot authoritatively upon the germ of that wretchedness which, if

allowed to mature, would set at naught her tender assiduity.

To one so ignorant and so helpless, even a few simple rules like the following—which, with many others of similar character, may be gleaned from any work on Physiology—would be of no small value.

1. Let the hours of rising and of retiring be uniform and early. Late hours, either for getting up or going to bed, are not only injurious in themselves, but introductory to many other bad habits.

2. Every sleeping apartment, and every other room of any kind, should be thoroughly ventilated. Pure air is the pabulum of life.

3. All extremes are to be avoided. No room should be extremely hot or extremely cold. The clothes should neither be too few nor too many. Exercise ought to be regular and lively, but not violent nor long continued. The human system has the power of accommodating itself to almost any circumstances, but it must do so by degrees. The chain that will draw tons if the power is moderately ap-

plied, is snapped in an instant by a sudden jerk.

4. Nowhere about the premises, from cellar to garret, in lanes or yards, or gutters, is any filth to be allowed if it can be avoided. All decaying vegetable matter, all putrescent substances of every kind, are dangerous to health.

5. No article of dress should be allowed to impair or impede any of the functions of the physical system. It is nothing short of murder to interfere with the circulation of the blood, or with the action of the lungs; neither may we interrupt the secretory, or excretory, or digestive functions.

6. Unnatural excitements should be dreaded as especially pernicious. Equable tempers are less exhausting and less dangerous. The carriage which moves too fast may not break nor be capsized, but it is much more liable to such accidents than if the rate of movement were slower.

7. But few medicines are to be given at any time, but such as are necessary will be plainly indicated by the condition of the person who needs them. What is obviously wanted ought

to be supplied by common sense. Indeed, physicians have no other means of curing than such as have been suggested in this manner. The habit of drugging the sick on all occasions is ruinous, whether practiced by the faculty or by an ignorant nurse.

8. All clothing worn next to the skin should be kept clean; change at least once each week. Some suppose that it is of no consequence whether articles not exposed to view are washed or not. Such betray great ignorance of the physical constitution.

9. See that all have clothing enough to keep them warm. Health and comfort, if not inseparable, are not to be sought in different directions. The girl who complains of a thick shawl or a thick shoe in cold or damp weather, should make up her mind to die with consumption. And the parent who allows such recklessness, is guilty of sanctioning the suicide.

10. Let it be remembered that children and youth of both sexes have equal health, if brought up with due regard to health. That delicacy of constitution so often witnessed in

young ladies is, in most cases, wholly artificial, having been superinduced by long-continued neglect of physical cultivation. A system of development would, if applied at a proper time, have given them the robust health which we admire in their brothers who have had a more rational training.

In matters pertaining to the body, as well as to the mind and morals, reason, and not fashion, is to have the predominance. With many, fashion is all. They cannot endure that their families should do or be what is not according to popular taste. In this foolish aping of a blind and brainless aristocracy, the first article of whose creed is that all below them are to be despised, many unsuspecting parents sacrifice the happiness of children. To such, gentility is everything, and health nothing.

All domestic regulations should be controlled by science. Tact is only productive of despatch. Science is the true basis of physical safety. The laws of our corporeal nature are revealed, and the natural sciences are but a collection of those laws, written by the finger of God on his works—they are the Bible for

our physical, as the Old and New Testaments are for our spiritual health.

In everything there should be diligent inquiry to know what is and what is not adapted to health. The charge of a family is no light charge; it is a vast responsibility, and falls with fearful definiteness on those in such a position. We may be content to do as others do, but this obsequiousness to established usage is the bane of all that is good. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil," is a voice that thunders in the ears of all who are inclined to waive a searching investigation into the character of domestic habits. Women are peculiarly liable to follow the customs of society which prevail around them, without inquiring fully into the tendency of things. Occupying as they do, in some respects, a subordinate position, modesty may perhaps lead to this unjustifiable pliancy; but science would be an effectual correction of this evil. However the ignorant woman may continue to violate the laws of health, yet such unnatural cruelty could not be practiced by one who was truly intelligent. The rea-

sons which are to control the female mind are embodied in science, and we cannot expect these reasons to have force till they become known. When society has performed its duty and given to science a diffusion coextensive with the demands of our nature, then, and not before, shall we find woman acting a part worthy of herself.

SECTION III.

PRESERVATION OF MORALS.

By far the most important consideration connected with the medical education of females, is the protection which it affords to their moral character. The distinction of sex, so immutable in the constitution of society, is entirely overlooked by the modern practice of medicine. The regular practice is exclusively in the hands of men, and no attention whatever is paid to the fact that female delicacy and virtue must suffer by such an unnatural arrangement. Physicians are a priv-

ileged class—a class whose privileges are the ruin of society. There is something indescribably horrible in this abuse. Under the name of humanity, and shielded by professional usage, the sacred barriers of morality have been broken down. A profession that might have been useful, had it confined its labors within proper limits, has, by overstepping those limits and thereby profaning the sanctity of female character and of conjugal vows, rendered itself one of the severest scourges that ever afflicted mankind.

If these remarks require any justification, let it be remembered that the practice of obstetrics—which involves everything in female delicacy—is left wholly to physicians. Never was there such a mistake as this, since man began his career of infatuation and folly. Here is a “violation of the instincts of nature,” a ruthless and effectual subversion of modesty, without even the shadow of an excuse. What would be thought of a man who in any other sphere should assume the fearful and diabolical office of depredation? Under other circumstances the same conduct would

cost a man his life, and is it worse to invade matrimonial rights in health than in sickness? Does the mere incident of illness furnish any sufficient reason for a disregard of modesty and virtue? The distinction of sex is laid in human nature—fixed by the creating hand, and on it are founded many of the most interesting relations and duties of life; it must therefore be preserved inviolate or the social fabric will be overthrown. God has decreed that every man shall have his own wife free from mercenary or other pollution, and no tampering of the medical faculty can for a moment be permitted without destruction to the marriage compact. Nor is the unmarried woman less dependent on her immaculate sanctity for a passport to connubial life. Let it be known that she is accessible to the physician, and who that pays the least regard to virtue would notice her? Nature groans under the infamous innovation. The female shrinks from the polluting touch of hireling corrupters, and scarcely knows which most to dread, the primal curse or the modern practice. She shrinks—but at last submits, overpowered

by ignorance—made the victim of the faculty through a base denial of necessary knowledge. She is compelled in the hour of need to dispense with all medical assistance, or to sacrifice her modesty in receiving aid from men.

Society has unequivocally condemned all virtual disregard of sexual distinctions. Its laws require an absolute non-interference with personal sanctity. But medicine has over-leaped these barriers, and has found means to achieve all that the most villanous and debauched could desire; and what is the price?—verily, secrecy. Physicians are permitted to lay unholy hands upon forbidden objects with one simple restriction, namely, secrecy; and that it is well known they do not always respect, as indeed they are under no obligation to do. Why might not any or all other men be elevated to the same familiarity with women? Will not they readily agree to the easy terms of secrecy? And will not other men be as likely to neglect further abuse and defilement, as is the physician? Do the laws of morality know any difference between a physician and any other man? Does the fact

that a man practices medicine give him any right to invade his neighbor's wife, or make his polluting intercourse with her either more decent, or moral, or safe? When the faculty have answered these questions to the satisfaction of intelligent and candid men, we will acknowledge them as public benefactors, and confess to the injustice of these remarks. But answer they cannot; and in default thereof, the present practice of medicine, especially obstetrics, must be set down, not only as having an immoral tendency, but as in itself a gross, abusive, and shameless immorality.

The capacity and fitness of women to practice in diseases peculiar to their sex, can never be doubted by those who reflect on the facts in the case. Female education hitherto has been little more than an insult offered to the human understanding. Every branch of knowledge that is of any real utility to the sex, has been industriously withheld from them, and they have been ushered into the world in mental and physical bondage, and doomed to the oppressive, unnatural, and inhuman supervision of physicians in particular, and of intellectual

men in general. It can no longer be questioned whether women have powers of mind equal to any intellectual efforts. Had former times left the fact doubtful, which they have not, the present age has established it forever. The names of More, Hemans, Sigourney, Baillie, Sedgwick, Edgeworth, Somerville, Ellis, Sherwood, Gould, Child, Willard, Charlotte Elizabeth, are more than sufficient to attest the capacity of woman. I shall therefore conclude, that as to mental qualifications there can be no question, and it only remains to inquire into their physical ability for the requisite medical and surgical operations. Obstetrics is the only branch in which a want of physical vigor can assume even the appearance of an objection. And what part of this performance requires any considerable strength is more than the faculty have been able to tell. The expulsion of the fœtus is, on all hands, allowed to be the work of nature, and hence it is no gigantic effort of the physician. It may be said that females have not nerves sufficiently strong to perform such assistance in the presence of so much pain. And this I

suppose is the reason why we are cursed with men on these occasions. But this is a most base and groundless assumption. What, women lack firmness of nerve for these occasions? and are they not always present? nay more, does not a woman bear all the pain and incur all the danger? If this be the case, cannot a well woman look on? cannot she bear to afford any assistance? Indeed this contradicts the entire history of the case as it now stands, for women are always present and perform the most difficult parts of the required assistance, as things are now managed. The employment of men is the innovation; the burden of proof, therefore, lies on the opposite side. 'Till very modern times women alone pretended to officiate, and although men have to a great extent usurped their office, they have not been more successful. For more than fifty centuries females have conducted such affairs with undisputed ability. Any invasion of their prerogatives in an enlightened age and among virtuous females would not have been tolerated. But darkness invites to crime, and prevents the apprehension of the criminal.

The faculty found women ignorant of medical science, and took the fearful responsibility of annihilating the sanctity of their persons. Man-midwifery began in France under the reign of Louis XIV., and began, as all such enormities must, with one of the vilest of characters—a public prostitute.

Such is the origin of a practice now followed by chaste American women. But will woman longer submit to such an outrage? Will she consent to this hireling prostitution under the name of medicine? Will she seal her infamy by acquiescence in a wrong of this horrid character? If so, we shall find relief in her degeneracy. She is no longer deserving of affection. As the beasts that perish, let her be disregarded. To make sure of their prey, physicians have conspired to keep up the dominion of ignorance. Women have been shut out from medical institutions, and all intimations of their rights have been withheld.

There are physicians of noble mind, to whom the injustice and indecency of man-midwifery are apparent; and such men abominate the practice as much as other people can do. There

are a few magnanimous individuals who yet retain some sense of right and wrong, and by whom the moral is still preferred to the immoral. We could with pleasure refer to many living names among the medical faculty, whose views we know to be in accordance with the sentiments here expressed. But we will not trouble the reader with authorities on a question like this; the supposition that he might need them would be a virtual impeachment of his understanding. The following remarks of an eminent physician are, however, such a judicious summary of the whole argument, that we shall not withhold them :

“The serious object of my present solicitude,” says Dr. Ewell,* “is to wrest the practice of midwifery from the hands of men and transfer it to women, as it was in the beginning and ever should be. I have seldom felt a more ardent desire to succeed in any undertaking, because I view the practice of calling on men in ordinary births as a source of serious evils to childbearing; as an imposi-

* Letters to Ladies. Quoted by Dr. Beach, Preface to Midwifery

tion upon the credulity of women, and upon the fears of their husbands ; as a means of sacrificing delicacy, and consequently virtue ; and as a robbery of many good women of their proper employment and support. Truly, it shows as extraordinary a revolution in practice as any afforded by a survey of all the arts. That all females bring forth their young without assistance, except the human in a state of civilization ; and that women should call for the assistance of men, while the human species is the only one tormented by jealousy, is a fact that will scarcely be credited in a Turkish harem, or by the Christians of some future and purer age. Should the strangers to the practice inquire if our men have large, unwieldy hands, great curiosity about women ; should they ask if our females had the requisites for useful services—small hands, nice sense of touch, and patience in attendance—they will absolutely deny this monstrous perversion of nature.

“ From the peaceful and retired occupations of women, they are generally more numerous in the community than men. Nevertheless,

the men have assumed several offices belonging to the weaker sex. The consequence is, that many women, as men in similar circumstances, wanting proper occupation, seek the employments of the vicious. Inasmuch, therefore, as these men-midwives have meddled with this proper business of women, they have been instrumental in the depravity of many. Indeed, it is owing to their acting where they are not required, that female practitioners are often so ignorant—not having the opportunity or means to qualify themselves for attendance on ladies.

“Several observing moralists have remarked that the practice of employing men-midwives has increased the corruption among married women. Even among the French, so prone to set aside the ceremonies between the sexes, the immorality of such exposures has been noticed. In an anecdote of Voltaire, it is related that when a gentleman boasted to him of the birth of a son, he asked who assisted at the delivery; to the answer, ‘A man-midwife,’ he replied, ‘Then you are traveling the road to cuckoldom.’ The acutely observing his-

torian of nature, Count Buffon (on puberty), observes, 'Virginity is a moral quality, a virtue which cannot exist but with purity of heart. In the submission of women to the unnecessary examinations of physicians, exposing the secrets of nature, it is forgotten that every indecency of this kind is a violent attack against chastity; that every situation which causes an internal blush is a real prostitution.'

"It is very certain, where these exposures have been most numerous, as in large cities, there adultery has been most frequent.

"Be it folly or prejudice, or not, there is a value in the belief, that the husband's hands alone are to have access to his sacred wife. Break through the prejudice, if you please to call it so, but for once, unless powerful reasons command it, the Rubicon is passed; and rely upon it, the barriers, on future emergencies, will not be so insuperable. Time and opportunity to press on a grateful heart, for a favor in regions where magnified favors have been conferred, have been used and more frequently desired. To convince you of this, you will

not require me to enter into the secret history of adultery:

“Many of those modest-looking doctors, inflamed with the thoughts of the well-shaped bodies of the women they have delivered, handled, hung over for hours, secretly glorying in the privilege, have to their patients, as priests to their penitents, pressed for accommodation, and driven to adultery and madness where they were thought most innocently occupied. In one case, I was well assured that a physician in Charleston, infuriated with the sight of the woman he had just delivered, leaped into her bed before she was restored to a state of nature. The melancholy tale of the seduction of the wife of a member of congress from Carolina, by her accoucheur, is a warning that ought not to be disregarded. The beautiful organization of the lady preyed upon his mind for years; he sought her from one to the other extremity of the country, regardless of all dangers; and on acquiring his game received a premature death—leaving horror and ruin in the family he had been hired to serve.

“Whatever you may think on this subject,

there are many husbands to whom the idea of their wives' exposure is horribly distressing. I have heard of cases affording singular mixtures of the distressing with the ludicrous. In one case in my neighborhood, the husband sent for his physician to his wife in labor, yet, was so strongly excited at the idea of her exposure, that he very solemnly declared to the doctor, that if he touched his wife, or looked at her, he would demolish him! No man possessed of a correct and delicate regard for his wife, would subject her to any exposure to a doctor, that could be avoided without danger.

“But the opposition, the detestation of this practice cannot be so great in any husband as among some women. The idea of it has driven some to convulsions and derangement; and every one of the least delicacy feels deeply humiliated at the exposure. Many of them, while in labor, have been so shocked by the entrance of a man into their apartment, as to have all their pains banished. Others, to the very last of their senses suffering the severest torments, have rejected the assistance of men. To be instrumental in relieving one of this

truly interesting cast, will be a heavenly consolation to all who can be alive to the pleasures of serving the virtuous."

Here, it will be seen, we have the testimony of two distinguished physicians, the one having written, and the other adopted the language of this extract. By no one can the practice be more severely censured than it is by these members of the profession. And as human nature and common sense are everywhere the same, it is presumable that all the upright portion of the faculty cherish a similar aversion to what they, as well as other men, must perceive to be a manifest invasion of natural right and moral purity.

How such a debasing and utterly shameless custom ever obtained in society, or why, now that it is established, the universal indignation of virtuous people does not banish it at once, is somewhat difficult to determine. Mr. Gregory, who has written an able work on the subject, ascribes it to ignorance, and to the kind offices of certain medical procuresses—a description of elderly women who seem to delight in prostrating the bulwarks of virtue.

"Physicians," says he, "are not without their *active* assistants in this business. There are multitudes of shameless old hags, who have themselves been handled by the doctors till they have lost all sense of modesty, and they then act as 'procuresses' for the obstetric gentlemen, going about and stirring up the fears of wives, especially young ones, making them believe the only alternative is *death* or the *doctor*, thus frightening the poor trembling, reluctant females into the hands of these men. Such creatures should not be allowed around among modest women. They admire to make themselves useful as accoucheurs' assistants, principally for the satisfaction of being present at these exhibitions. They take particular pains to exclude the husband, that their sociability and freedom may not be abridged. One of them said 'she always felt *ashamed* to see a young husband hanging round!'"

Thus the husband is, as it were, driven from his wife on these occasions, and she is put into the hands of another man! Such a practice is enough to make the cheek of vice itself crimson with shame. It were far better to

have no wife than to have one under circumstances of this kind—better to be childless and homeless than to become the victim of mercenary pollution.

Before I dismiss this part of the subject, it is necessary to consider more fully the enormity of subjecting young women to the present medical usage. The unlimited power of physicians over them, and the consequent danger to their reputation and virtue, are sufficiently evident to all who are in the least acquainted with medical practice. Now it is a first principle in civilized society, that young women are to be treated with respect; their persons are ever considered perfectly inviolable. But they are human beings, and as such, subject to many diseases peculiar to their sex, and also to other ailments, the treatment of which requires a greater familiarity with their persons than can safely or justifiably be committed to any man. I am aware that the mother or some older woman that may happen to be present, often serves as a channel of communication, and the doctor makes his shameless disclosures to those who are already

hardened through repeated violations of nature and modesty. Yet this alters not the case, for all young women have not a mother nor an older female friend to shield them from the direct approach of the faculty. There is, however, a more revolting aspect of this affair. Many of the faculty are not married men, and the young female has to come under the treatment and into the power of one to whom most of all she dreads to reveal the peculiarities of her situation and nature. She knows with what pleasure he will approach and avail himself of observations to which he is in no degree entitled, and to which she cannot submit without a conscious self-degradation. Is there any mercy or humanity in thus contemning all the virtuous and delicate sensibilities of womanhood? And if we add now, what must often be added, that the physician is of licentious character, and will not fail to seize upon any advantages of this kind which his profession may throw in his way, what hopes can we cherish that the virtue of the female will survive? Betrayed through parental neglect and the debasing customs of society, to a premature and

unnatural intercourse with men, is anything but the ruin of morals to be expected? Nay, rather, is not the moral character ruined by this very act? Is there not made a fatal inroad upon that modesty which should never be invaded?

The instances here mentioned comprehend but few of the horrors of this shameful practice. Through all the varied relations of social life the dangers and the corruptions of this pernicious usage diffuse their influence, and weaken, to an alarming degree, the foundations of society. While the faculty maintain integrity enough to support external decency, the extent of their encroachments is not perceived, and all is supposed to be safe and right. Did they improve every opportunity their practice affords, for the actual and gross pollution of women, public hostility would intercept their progress. Prudence forbids this, even if they desired freedom from all restraint. But in this crisis, what becomes of precision in morals? Is a citadel guarded no better than this, judged to be worthy of defence? We leave the measure of prostitution to be deter-

mined by the faculty, subject only to their own judgment of what is consistent with public forbearance. Surely we need not, under such circumstances, inquire what is likely to become the standard of morals. Delicacy and moral sensitiveness are out of the question. If the least approximation to immorality is the commencement of ruin—if a single iota of ground ceded here is necessarily fatal, we need not inquire into the sequel of premeditated exposure.

SECTION IV.

SECURITY OF THE FAMILY COMPACT.

From the preceding section, as well from every other view of human interests, it is evident that there should be in every community enough well-educated women to practice obstetrics, and thus give security to the family compact, by allaying all uneasiness and removing temptations to immorality.

No one in the least acquainted with human nature will need to be told that an occurrence

which, in all but its legal bearings, is more than sufficient to produce a divorce, cannot fail to shake the foundation of connubial happiness. The wife is sacred to her husband. She can belong to no other except her God. Be it that this tie is broken—this sanctity removed, and whatever may be the cause, the effect will be very nearly the same. The husband's feelings must endure the shock ; he will know that his rights have been invaded, and that the wife of his bosom is no longer sacred to himself. Whether the evil springs from lustful appetite on her part, or on the part of those by whom she is surrounded, or is occasioned by some depraved social custom, is of no great consequence, since the fact is the same, whatever may have been its cause. There is a difference of motive which may go, and does go far, to reduce the guilt in one case below what it is in the other, but the physical fact remains unchanged. A man's property may perish by the torch of the incendiary or by the ordinary casualties of Providence ; yet the loss is not varied by the manner of its occurrence. If females are left in such a state of ignorance

as not to be able to provide for their own health without an improper exposure of their persons to the other sex, those to whom they are united in marriage must feel the weight of this exposure, and estimate their matrimonial connections at what they may be worth under the circumstances. Such an item of insecurity and injustice would, to many a sensitive nature, more than balance the advantages of a marriage contract. If the man must plight his faith and receive his bride only to have her despoiled under the protection of law, he would choose to refrain from the alliance. What aggravates the evil is, that marriage generally takes place before the parties know anything of the debasing circumstances to which they are afterwards to be subjected. Did they know at the outset that sanctity was to be but a name, and that the medical profession was to set at naught all the decencies of life and plunge into the excess of abuse, then there would at least be no advantage taken of their honest intentions. But at present the imposition comes up unexpectedly, and diffuses a blight on sanctities that had been cherished

as the foundation of domestic life. Before there is opportunity to resist, or time to reflect, all is swept away in the tide of fashionable depravity. The wife is sick—the physician is called—thenceforth a family physician—scarcely less intimate in any respect, and in some more intimate with her than the husband himself. She is to be with the physician when her husband cannot be, and is made his confidant in matters never broken to the ears of the man whose name she bears. I am sure every reflecting woman will see the effect which this state of things must have upon a man. He may not impute to his wife any overt intention, but he will deeply realize how far she is from being his own. The hold which she had upon his affections will grow less every hour, and though he may live with her because the law does not, under the circumstances, recognize his right to a divorce, yet it will be with a saddened, impoverished heart, doomed to bear a weight of inconceivable anguish. The husband must know that he is an injured man, and that it is not in human power to redress the wrong which he suffers. Lost sanc-

tity cannot be restored. Though crime may not be imputed, though his wife has only suffered the common measure of degradation, yet he deplores, and must forever deplore, the ruthless invasion of his rights by the medical faculty. Many a wife might date at this early period of her married life, the commencement of future troubles. Vigorous affections were nipped in the bud; ere the birth of the first child perhaps the fatal blow was given to domestic peace. Relief is found in paying less attention to those whom we discover to be less ours. A highly excited and injured state of feeling, from which there is no possibility of deliverance by ordinary methods, breaks down the most sacred barriers of the heart, and the man who loved his wife next to his God, and preferred her to all others of her sex, must soothe himself by reflecting how little important she is to his happiness. Women should tremble at the price they pay for the attentions of medical gentlemen on such occasions. This world is not so constituted that the sacred principles of purity and justice can be trifled with; and if women will employ men on occasions

of confinement, they must lay their account with the probable sacrifice of affection. It would be asking too much of the human heart not to allow it to reject indignantly assaults upon its rights, nor can we always very accurately distinguish between a merely passive and a voluntary acquiescence in what is wrong. Still the husband is inclined to make apologies and regard his wife as the victim of social, rather than of personal corruption. But it is impossible to keep down suspicion, and prevent an impression that these unjust and demoralizing exposures are not the choice of women. Some women are so tenacious of adhering to the practice of man-midwifery, that we must necessarily conclude they would have no objections to it if their husbands had none; and as the case now is, they are ready to hazard respect at home, rather than relinquish a practice recommended to them by general usage.

The effects of this exposure on the heart and mind of woman, are not the less real or the less pernicious for being incidental. She is brought into contact with the other sex in a manner affecting character, and it is not op-

tional with her whether the exposure of her person shall or shall not be attended with evil effects upon her own mind. To be sure, she does not seek the occasion—for if she did, a divorce would be inevitable—but she is overtaken by the assailant of her virtue, and may not innocently remain in such a situation. Her person being sacred to another, should make it exceedingly displeasing to her to be, or appear to be, unfaithful to her marriage covenant. As a wife she is already appropriated, and there is none upon earth to whom she may commit herself. The propriety and extent of this consecration are likely to be felt by the husband; they are to him the pledge of domestic bliss, and the bond which binds him to a similar restriction. Any negligence on her part, if it does not provoke a corresponding depravity in him, will most surely weaken his attachment to her. He may not become vicious, but he will cease to love. Esteem is for the virtuous, and confidence for the incorruptible; but a woman passive enough to yield obsequiously to a debasing practice, is neither virtuous nor incorruptible, and therefore cannot retain her

place in the affections of an upright man. Females may think the universality of the custom in question will give it sufficient authority, and render it innoxious upon their social relations; but let them beware of deception—the instincts of nature are not to lie dormant at the bidding of popular abuses. Every man who has a wife must resent all improper treatment of her, however such treatment may be viewed by the public. The heart and the conscience are not regulated by a profession, nor can they ever become so worthless as to acknowledge no higher control than the artificial distinctions of society. Our faculties cannot be bribed. Man must ever hate the wrong, while he loves the right. It is in vain, therefore, to rely upon the conformity of our powers to a radical corruption of this kind. Nature will revolt. Woman must be free, not only from all suspicion of too ready an acquiescence in a corrupt practice, but from all actual taint, whether intentional or unintentional, or she cannot possess the affection and respect essential to the conjugal state.

When we consider how peculiar, and in

several respects, how slight is the tie which binds the husband and wife together, we see at once the necessity of maintaining it unimpaired. The attractive influence by which such associations are formed is only sufficient for the object designed; "God who setteth the solitary in families," has not created a surplus of these hallowed drawings, and if we trifle with attachments so vital to the social system, we shall find the course of life seriously interrupted. The family may not in every instance be broken up, but there will be a partial alienation—a diminished regard, which is wholly unnecessary, and which domestic interests cannot well sustain. The wife and mother need never depreciate; the freshness of youthful love and the entire devotion of early married life may remain, and will remain, if the sanctities of the relation are not ruthlessly invaded. No husband's affections—if he be a virtuous man—will become less toward the partner of his life till it is evident to his mind that she is wanting in purity of character. In the estimation of the husband the wife's character is her all. Her sex alone made her an object of

choice, or, rather, alone made it possible for her to be a wife; and she can only enter into or sustain that important relation by immaculateness of sexual virtue. As woman she has power that will not decline. This is the talismanic influence which binds her to the other sex, and which she must preserve at all hazards.

I have extended these remarks quite far enough, perhaps, but it may be well to remind the reader, that obstetric practice is only one of many disgusting immoralities introduced by physicians. They have access to women on other occasions, and take liberties with them in other things quite as fatal to modesty and virtue. On this point we must refer to medical works, and in view of the facts there to be found in abundance, we think no intelligent person will hesitate to say that female physicians are necessary among their own sex.

SECTION VI.

THE REMEDY.—PROGRESS OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AMONG FEMALES.

FOR the evils which we have set forth there is but one remedy, namely, the thorough physical education of women. We must have not only such a knowledge of Hygiene as will secure a proper development and careful preservation of the physical system among women generally, but a due proportion of them should be thoroughly educated physicians—capable of treating all diseases, and especially all peculiar to their sex, in the most scientific and successful manner. Then it will not be necessary to confound distinctions and outrage morality on any occasion—whatever can be done or need to be done, being as fully within the reach of a female medical attendant as it could be of a male practitioner. It is a very grave insult to the mind of woman to say, or even to imply by our arrangements, that she has not sense enough to manage her own affairs. She is capable of suffering with a constancy most admirable, and

she ventures heroically to soothe the most wretched through every scene of pain to the very gates of death. Whoever may quail where sickness and death abound, woman does not. She is last at the cross, and first at the sepulchre. Tact, judgment, tenderness, quickness of apprehension—each and every quality desirable in the physician, may be found in her as fully as in the other sex. The restoration to females of their share in the medical treatment of human maladies, is demanded no less as a matter of respect for their intellectual powers, than as a means for securing their morals from depravation. For this reform the public are now ready, with the exception of a few unprincipled physicians, and perhaps as many ignorant women, who are equally unprincipled. Every man not in the medical profession, and every physician of honorable feelings, as well as every woman of virtuous character, must desire the change. Women are beginning nobly to assert their rights, and a few years, if we are not greatly mistaken, will serve to effect a complete revolution in this part of medical practice. The Boston

Medical and Surgical Journal lately contained a severe article on the "Empirical School of Midwifery;" charging, as usual, women with incompetency, and others with improper motives. To this ungentlemanly tirade a female wrote a reply which the editor probably dare not refuse. We give the following extract, which shows that some ladies understand themselves quite too well to be longer the victims of such base deception :

"Your correspondent complains that the clergy are favorable to this movement, and calls in question the motives which actuate a 'body of so much intelligence and benevolence.' I answer, that it is this very intelligence and benevolence that causes them to feel so deep an interest in the matter, and which prompts them to advocate the good of the community at large, rather than the pecuniary interest of a would-be favored few, who would keep females in ignorance of their own organization, that they might reap the benefit of their consequent suffering. And in the present state of 'medical literature,' when every book is filled with technicalities which none but the

learned and scientific are expected to understand, to whom are we to look for a precedence in these things, but to those in whom we place the most confidence and trust. Your correspondent thinks that cases of difficult parturition have tended to throw the practice naturally and legitimately into the hands of male practitioners. I would ask if medical statistics have ever shown a greater number of deaths of parturient females, even when the practice was entirely in the hands of females, and when it was considered disgraceful for a male to be present. But is it not rather to be attributed to the diffidence and disquietude which a delicate female must feel in such presence, (at a time when of all others she needs to be soothed, and made perfectly at ease,) that difficult cases are of such frequent occurrence?

“Your correspondent says that those who practice the profession need the experience derived from ordinary cases to qualify *them* to meet the more difficult. But I do not believe a case of difficult parturition ever occurred, in which it would not have been more consonant with the feelings of the sufferer to have had a

female practitioner, *provided* she could have possessed the *requisite knowledge*; and it is that knowledge we aim at, and claim that we have a right to possess. It is our lack of means for obtaining such knowledge of which we complain. He also states that he has had cases which no *ordinary* female could have managed with safety. Most likely; *ordinary* females should not be engaged in the business. Ordinary *men* are not, or should not be. But let females who have a capacity for the business receive some of the advantages which have been so amply provided for the 'lords of creation;' let them be admitted to your college, receive the benefit of your medical lectures, and have access to your extensive libraries, and when they have studied 'long enough,' let them be critically examined by your professors, and let such only as are competent receive authority to practice, and *ordinary* women would no longer find employment.

"Your correspondent also asks, will the 'well-educated and most sensible women engage?' I would answer that there may not be many whose tastes would lead them into the

study. But it has always been considered an honorable employment for a *man*, and I trust the time is not far distant, when it will no longer be thought a *disgrace* for *woman* to be capable of administering to the necessities of her own sex. And when physiological knowledge shall be more generally diffused among females—when they understand more fully the wonderful organization of their own being—they will no longer remain thoughtless or passive upon so important a subject, permitting your sex to monopolize a branch which a proper sense of decorum *should* proclaim belonged *exclusively* to us.”

Thus efficiently will females plead their own cause when once they come to realize the facts in the case. Already has this reviving moral sentiment begun to embody itself in appropriate action; it is not merely as a private opinion or a smothered resentment of soul that objections now exist. A righteous repugnance has originated two female medical colleges within the present year—one in Philadelphia, and the other in Boston. Both of these institutions are regularly chartered by the states

in which they are located, and the latter has been in successful operation for the two years past. Besides these, the Central Medical College at Rochester—one of the best institutions in the country—freely admits ladies to its entire course of instruction, and has in fact a female professorship. This college has graduated eight females during the present year. The Medical College at Memphis, Tennessee, has also graduated two ladies, and the college at Geneva, N. Y., one—Miss Blackwell. These are favorable indications, and furnish most encouraging evidence that nothing but a deliberate choice of depravity can keep the old practice alive. Public instruction will go on, and many females become qualified for the practice of medicine in all its extent. These will all be wanted. But we need not wait till a thoroughly educated generation can arise; a very little instruction will enable any ordinary woman to be so far useful to her sex on occasions of sickness, as to cut off all necessity for employing men. Private reading and practical experience—the great sources of medical knowledge, are open to all females, and by means of these

they might soon qualify themselves for the most extended practice. But in any event it would hardly be possible for them not to become competent to those pressing demands which are of daily occurrence.

Physicians, when they find how this branch of their practice is viewed, may perhaps attempt some reform—discarding the grosser features of the thing, they may hope to retain it without offence. But the evil is too great ever to be reformed; it is an unmixed wrong, and cannot be made right. Nothing short of extirpation will answer. The public mind will continue to be shocked, and all our better feelings outraged, while any vestige of the practice remains. The demand for female practitioners must be co-existent with virtuous feeling. While woman is prized, her desecration must be felt as a calamity to the social affections.

It is difficult to speak of a great public abuse in terms sufficiently measured. Severity requires to be tempered by prudence. In the statements which we have made in this and the preceding sections, the intelligent

reader will readily perceive there is no exaggeration; facts have been given without the slightest attempt at coloring. Truths which cannot be gainsayed, and whose specific enormity is sufficient to harrow up feelings of the deepest indignation in every heart, may safely be left to produce their effect, unembellished by rhetoric and unmagnified by prejudice. Let physicians complain, if they dare, of injustice; let them defend themselves if they can. We know that some—many of them—are pure-minded men; but this does not by any means exculpate the profession at large. A good man will always regret occasions of temptation; he pities the degraded condition of humanity, and would fain keep himself from injuring others either wittingly or unwittingly. To him, custom and law are valuable only as they are right; and however he may yield to pernicious customs, he does it with reluctance and without the slightest tincture of that fiendish pleasure which a corrupt man takes in following the depraved courses of the world. We cannot suppose that an honorable physician would so far forget himself as to describe

in public what he had seen in private, or boast of the manner in which he had handled the women whom custom had betrayed into his hands. Yet the profession abounds with men who are mean enough to do it, and who glory in this very thing—nay more, who in all probability entered the medical profession on purpose thus to get access to females. But whether they originally entered the profession for such an object or not, they soon became capable of rioting on the spoils of virtue. Finding themselves admitted to hold intercourse with women—yes, to have privileges with them such as no other class of men have, they have, as a natural consequence, given way to an almost, if not quite, unavoidable licentiousness. Little do husbands or wives know the brutal triumph which these professional debauchers exhibit over their victims, or the ardent longings they have to enlarge their practice in this direction.

“When lecturing,” says Mr. Gregory, “in Lynn, last fall, several of the citizens spoke before the audience, approving of my course, and corroborating my statements with addi-

tional facts. Among others, a gentleman, known in the literary world, said he thought the business should be in the hands of women; said a doctor there, on seeing a beautiful lady *enciente*, passing in the street, elbowed a friend, and said, 'I should like to attend that lady by and by, to see her handsome person.'

"Mrs. Ruth Stebbins, before spoken of, said the young doctors of Suffield, Ct., when speaking of attending the young wives on the first occasion, called it 'halter-breaking them.' And, rejoicing in their occupation, 'There,' they would say to each other, as they looked out into the street, 'there goes one that I halter-broke a few weeks ago—and there, yonder, comes another that I shall break in soon.' Suppress your indignation, reader, and go earnestly about correcting this libidinous system.—Dr. K., of M., in this state, remarked to the publisher that he had heard young physicians, in their confidential chats, boast of having committed adultery with women, when their husbands were in the house at the time."

While such abominations are an inseparable attendant not only of man-midwifery, but of

nearly the whole attention which male physicians bestow upon their female patients, we can have no hope of virtue but in the establishment of medical schools for each of the sexes. So long as human nature is the same in physicians that it is in other men, so long must they be corrupted by this unnatural access to women. And on the other hand, while women are susceptible of unchastity, they cannot fail of becoming unchaste under such treatment.

It only remains, then, to determine whether we will longer submit to an evil which must forever prove uncontrollable. Shall the distinction of sex be regarded, or shall it not, in the department of medicine? If best to abolish it here, it is best to abolish it elsewhere. If our wives and daughters are to be delivered up to doctors, we may as well give all other men the same access to them. A diploma makes no difference either with the law of God, or with the carnal propensities of the heart. Debauchery and indecency are just as lawful and just as expedient without as with a license to practise medicine. The wrong done to conjugal rights and sanctities is not mitigated in

the least because the man who does it holds a parchment.

These views are not new. I have steadily maintained them for the last fifteen years, and the greater part of the last three sections was actually written fourteen years ago. Since that time I have had ample opportunities for experience and observation, but the opinions then forced upon me have only been confirmed by subsequent events. And it is gratifying to know that the country is awaking from its long slumber to a just sense of its danger and degradation. I have written from motives of humanity, and from no more of revengeful feeling than rightly enters into every work of reform. There are miseries growing out of this practice known only to the heart of him who suffers them. I have mercifully been exempted from what would be called an abuse of the medical practice, but the evil in its most restrained and mitigated form is too horrible for endurance—a mountain weight of wretchedness crushing a sensitive soul to the earth, and blighting the fairest prospects of life. If there is nothing in human hearts responsive

to this declaration, then I may easily be convicted of error, and shall cheerfully suffer whatever punishment is due to my fault. But let the public judge—let the husbands and wives of our country decide the question. It is a matter in which the faculty have no concern beyond a fee, unless it should be in exculpating themselves from the censures of an indignant community.

CHAPTER VI.

Domestic Education.

ACCORDING to the arrangements which prevail in social life—arrangements founded on the obvious indication of nature, and not on capricious or arbitrary allotment—to woman belongs the supervision of domestic affairs. The care of helpless offspring devolves upon her, and consumes the time and the strength which are demanded in providing for the subsistence of the household. The husband's superior and less encumbered physical powers fit him for a general purveyor, while the wife's greater tenderness and more confined circumstances equally fit her for the duties of home. She is indeed a helpmeet for man, and he no less a help for her.

SECTION I.

HOME.

THERE is scarce another word in our language so full of inspiration as *home*; it is the place of purest, deepest joy, where the fountains of affection are unsealed, and the stream of happiness gushes forth continually. But home we owe to woman. She makes the place a sanctuary of joys, and garners there the affections of the heart. Home without the mother, the wife, the sister, and the daughter would be desolate indeed; it is not the charmed spot where we nestled in our infantine years, nor the rich assemblage of delights in which manhood glories, nor yet that new world—that reproduction of existence—which cheers departing age. The danger is that woman may forget the importance of home, and of her sphere as the peculiar guardian of its interests. If she despises her lot, and pants for a more extended field of usefulness, the social system becomes at once deranged. Every species of female deformity—from the taper-waisted ex-

quisite to the brazen-faced Amazon—which has grown out of deserting the proper sphere of woman, or of assuming in any degree the attributes of the other sex, is both hateful and mischievous. God has assigned to woman her sphere, and in that sphere she can have no rival. While she knows her position and keeps it willingly and faithfully, she will not fail to accomplish the highest purpose of her being, nor to receive all the honor due to her nature.

With woman there is too often a reluctance to be occupied with domestic cares. The children are of no consequence—mere hindrances to certain other pursuits which, but for this encumbrance, would be allowed to engross the whole time. It may be these other pursuits are the culture of flowers, the reception of company, or the management of business—no matter which—for that other occupation, whatever it may be, if preferred to the constitutional duty of taking care of her children, is a miserable perversion of life. That which Providence has so evidently devolved upon the female as attention to her own offspring, cannot be willingly neglected without transforming

the neglecter, herself, into a monster. She who can wish to throw off such cares must be capable of any wickedness, however great. The heart that could steel itself against infantile tenderness, would find no difficulty in shutting out all other claims of humanity. It is therefore to be viewed as an unfavorable indication, when a woman counts this part of her duty drudgery. What, is the being to whom is given in charge the rising generation, to deem her task an ignoble one? Is there no honor or importance in replacing the wasted population of the earth? For what then do we live, and of what consequence is the race of man? Adam called his wife's name Eve—that is, *Life*—"because she was to be the mother of all living." This is the predestinated honor and distinction of woman. She is the immediate agent of God in giving existence to the successive generations of mankind. To her we are indebted for life, and it is not possible for artificial distinctions, however perverse, to cut off or in any way cancel the high obligation growing out of this fact. Woman's place is high, not by courtesy only, but by es-

sential right. She occupies a relation that we cannot contemn so long as we value life. Now if she could throw off this responsibility and evade the duties of the nursery, then, and not till then, might she sink to actual insignificance. Then she might be a thing

“Bred only and completed to the taste
Of lustful apetence, to sing, to dance,
To dress, and troll the tongue, and roll the eye.” *

We grant that other pursuits may appear to the superficial observer more inviting than the sober and often perplexing cares of a family, and so might the duties of the other sex appear repulsive if viewed in the same manner. The earth is cursed, and man can only secure a competence for himself and family by persevering toil. No doubt he would gladly shrink from his appointed lot, and gain a subsistence without industry, if it were practicable. But all know that this would not be for his best good—his condition demands the wearying labor to which he is assigned. So also is it with woman. She would only be injured by ex-

* Paradise Lost, Book XI.

emption from the trying concerns of the domestic relation. Made to sustain the dignity and to perform the duties of a mother, she cannot attain the excellence of which her nature is susceptible, while living in open contempt of a manifest law of her being.

I am not of the opinion that the delights of home are dependent on woman alone. Man has his share in the formation of this domestic paradise. For,

— “Though nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,”

yet, it is throwing by far too much upon her to insist that she shall make home happy without the concurrence of man. Her presence and her agency are indispensable, but the part which man is to act must neither be forgotten nor neglected. Let the female be held responsible for her part, but let her not be burdened with duties which belong to the other sex. She is joint partner, and not sole proprietor, of home.

SECTION II.

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

As ladies are designed by nature for the supervision of home, they ought early and strenuously to cultivate the love of home-pleasures and home-duties. This would cut off that disposition to murmur which springs from disappointment. Much of the disquietude of married life originates in thoughtlessness, or more strictly, perhaps, in the idle roving of an unchastened imagination. The mind had been suffered to dwell upon the nuptial state as a release from the monotonous drilling of plain everyday life. Over the whole scene was spread an air of romance which experience could not fail to dissipate. Of course nothing but regret could follow the discovery of such a hallucination. But in this, as in every other thing where the imagination has been suffered to mislead, the real is better than the imaginary. Woman's sphere is more noble than the fanciful, voluptuous career which her untutored powers had sketched. The spell is

broken to be sure, but it ought to give no pain, inasmuch as the destiny opened before her has all the dignity of true greatness, and all the happiness possible to humanity. She is not to float along in abject dependence, happy only in servility, and conforming readily to all the modes of fashionable folly. Under the influence of truth she takes her place among the prime agents of the world's renovation. No longer inferior in her own or others' estimation—except as every Christian may esteem himself inferior to others—she enters upon the task of life with the conscious responsibility appropriate to one who acts a part assigned by Providence.

It is easy, by the help of a little reflection, to perceive the importance of household duties. There is an intimate connection between these duties and civilized life. The homes of a people are the true index of their civilization. Almost the first step in improvement is to make the comfortless cabin give place to the stately mansion. In like manner the style of dress and of furniture, of living and of laboring, all change from utter rudeness to those

several degrees of elegance and propriety which distinguish cultivated society. These changes not only affect home, but they constitute, in some degree, its very substance—they are the fit embodiment of a principle which, though it may exist in a savage state, yet never finds in that state an adequate expression. As certain fruits and vegetables growing wild are found to be unpalatable, but improve into luxurious richness by domestication; so the social condition of our race—the hearts and homes of mankind—improve as they advance from the savage to the civilized state. This assemblage of comforts which we denominate home, is not an incident, nor is the effect produced upon it by cultivation incidental; home is an estate, and changes in it for the better are the truest riches of earth. Commerce and art not only unite to enrich domestic stores, but seem to have scarcely any other design; all embellishments, all luxuries, all acquisitions, whether of wealth or science, appear to centre here. And over the magnificent collection thus gathered from a world's activities, woman is called to preside. She sits as queen amid concentra-

ted blessings. To her, as mistress of the house, all domestic happiness is committed.

If, in addition to this, we consider that the family is the place of early instruction and training—where moral, intellectual and physical education is chiefly acquired—we surely shall need no further argument to show that woman's position is not an ignoble one. She has indeed a station of immense responsibility; she is the immediate guardian of the most cherished interests, and man is but the collector of stores which await her disposal. More confined, more frail, and more exposed than man, it is fit that she should be sheltered by home, and furnished with employments less oppressive to the physical system.

It is strange that a position of so much consequence should ever have been deemed either dishonorable or unimportant; and yet it is not more strange than true. Nor is woman alone responsible for this mistake. Man has too often pointed to her occupation as insignificant, and she has felt the unmerited scorn. In this, however, as in other things, ignorance rather than malice, has prompted the sneer, and equal

ignorance on the part of her for whom the sneer was intended, has produced a deplorable alienation from one of the noblest pursuits. The following remarks of Dr. Alcott place the subject in its true light :

“I am sometimes astonished to find the employment of housekeeping rated so low. The cultivator of the soil and the keeper of the house, are considered as mere drudges, nigh akin to the domestic animals of which they have charge ; while the useless or almost useless being, that struts about doing nothing and producing nothing, either by the labor of body or mind—he is the true man, the man of value. He may, perhaps, have a soul.

“These things ought not so to be. Young housekeeper, you must resolve, that so far as in you lies, they shall not be so. But in order to this, learn to reverence yourself and respect your profession. Make no unworthy concessions of inferiority. Just so surely as the soul takes its hues—yea, its character too—from the condition of the clay tenement in which it dwells, just so surely is your profession that of determining what the condition of this clay

tenement shall be; and it is one of the noblest that can adorn or exalt humanity.

“Away, then, from your mind, every unworthy idea concerning domestic life. Away the feeling, that your occupation is an inferior one. Fools may call it so; fools *have* called it so.”*

I do not by any means affirm that woman's sphere is exclusively domestic. Her sphere is wherever good can be done. She does but share domestic duties with man. In like manner she ought to participate with him in every department of enterprise; though nature we think, obviously indicates by the superior strength which she gives to man, that to him belong the more rugged, and to woman, the lighter parts of human labor.

SECTION III.

DUTY TO HERSELF.

Among the first of these duties is the preservation of her own health. One of the

* The Young Housekeeper, p. 51.

most common and most fatal evils of our social system is that of overtasking the physical powers. Women, instead of regulating their labor by some judicious method, and carefully restricting their efforts to their actual ability, not unfrequently sacrifice both health and happiness to excessive toil. Continued delving soon breaks down the best constitution and leaves the individual a wreck. Such a waste of health is totally unjustifiable. It is not demanded by any law of God or man. The customs of society may have imposed the task, but in this, society is wrong, and ought to be reformed. If the complicated housewifery of modern times has devolved upon woman cares and toils beyond her strength, she must resist the demand, and throw herself upon the principles of morality and common sense for justification. Reform is needed in the department of housekeeping, quite as much as in the state, or in the public manners generally. Many things now required of females, are of no real importance to domestic enjoyment. They are matters of show, and not of solid comfort. How preposterous for the wife and mother to

destroy her life by a drudgery in things of no essential advantage !

But even allowing that her labors were all requisite to comfort, would it not be infinitely better that the household should divide with her—should share the inconvenience of not having some things, rather than devolve upon woman a burden to which her strength is inadequate ? In some cases it is better that one should suffer than many, but not in this ; as every considerate mind would much prefer to dispense with a portion of its accustomed provision, rather than see a frail woman crushed under a weight of toil. The accommodations we so highly prize, and which are so gratifying to refinement, lose all their value when they are known to have been procured at the expense of health, if not of life, on the part of those we love. It was greatly to the honor of David that he would not drink the water which had been procured for him at such hazard by the men of his army. “My God forbid it me that I should do this thing ; shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy ? for with the jeopardy of their lives

they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it.”*

It is to be questioned, too, whether there is any kindness in such devotion. The woman who injures herself to relieve the slight discomforts of her family is, in fact, inflicting upon them by this very act a much greater evil than she removes. Her life is worth more to them than the advantages arising from her disproportioned efforts. A sick wife or mother is such an affliction as cannot be compensated by any amount of domestic comforts. Better would it be for all, that she should remain in health, though something were abridged from the wonted effects of her industry, than that she should sink under disease, and deprive herself of the power to contribute in any measure to the welfare of those around her.

But there is another, and if possible, still more important duty which she owes to herself—the cultivation of her mind. It so happens that the exacting usages of society consume all the time of women, and leave them not an hour for intellectual improvement. To yield to this state of

* 1 Chron. xi. 19.

things is, of course, to defeat the great work of self-education, which should be carried on at all times and under all circumstances in life ; it is to make woman—what she too frequently is—a mere domestic servant, without intelligence, and therefore without fitness for the higher duties of her station. Nothing could more effectually degrade her calling as a housekeeper, or produce discontent in her own mind with that calling, than thus to connect it inevitably with ignorance. And, we may add, nothing else could more effectually disqualify her for honor and usefulness in that calling. The time is past—or will soon be—in which an ignorant woman can be deemed a competent housekeeper.

The idea that domestic duties are incompatible with mental culture is absurd in the highest degree. Every woman should rigidly insist upon abstracting sufficient time from her other avocations, to meet the demands of intellectual nature. We are aware of the multiplicity and peculiar urgency of the calls upon her, but she must not yield to the temptation. As a woman—as a rational and accountable

being, something more is required of her than simply to spend her physical strength in subservience to the family interests. She is as much bound to provide for her own improvement, as to labor industriously for the benefit of others. And unless she is strenuous on this point, she will do irreparable injury to herself and to all who are associated with her.

There is yet another branch of duty, which, for the sake of convenience, I will call the ethics of housekeeping. Our modern housewifery not only sweeps away health and intelligence, but it depreciates character and deadens the moral sense. In no other way can we account for the rampancy of fashion, and the almost total distrust of moral excellence as a means of securing respect. Utility and decency are not the basis of our customs; we take the popular course, with little reference to right or wrong. Family arrangements seem to be viewed as lying without the province of morality—a mere succession of trivial affairs, in which we are to be governed by our own caprices. Now it is very evident that no woman with such views is prepared to acquit

herself reputably as a housekeeper. Nothing short of divesting herself of all dubiousness at this point, and entering upon the discharge of her duties as a high moral trust, can save her from imbecility and danger. She must regard herself as having a mission from God—and that mission the care of her family.

SECTION IV.

FACILITY AND DESPATCH.

MUCH that is onerous in housekeeping arises undoubtedly from an ill-arranged method of business. Ladies are too generally in the habit of following the antiquated routine of affairs, to the neglect of those improvements which shorten the processes of labor. Hence, although the number of things to be done has greatly increased upon the hands of housekeepers, yet the time requisite for each of them is not at all diminished. This state of things is of long continuance, and has become a source of intolerable oppression to the domestic circle.

Woman, who should find nothing but salutary exercise in the care of her house, is doomed to a service as unremitting as that of the galley-slave. Still the fault is measurably her own, because she ought to have given better heed to the circumstances of her condition, and either resisted the multiplication of demands upon her time, or readjusted her affairs so as to have met these increased demands without the necessity of converting herself into a mere drudge. There is, indeed, a remedy short of this, but it belongs only to the rich; money will hire help sufficient to carry out the most complicated arrangements in housekeeping. What the rich can do, however, is no rule for the poor, nor does it in any degree settle the question of propriety. It may be that the individuals who thus serve the wealthy are injured by such service; they have employment, we admit, but it is likely that under a more enlightened domestic economy, they might have both employment and independence. Many of the poor who are kept as servants, ought to be taught the art of living, and be raised by it above that precariousness insepa-

rable from their secondary relation to society. The servant usually has no more than a bare subsistence, and if the wants of a family are to be provided for out of the avails of such service, the most abject poverty, sooner or later, must inevitably follow. It is therefore unmerciful to favor a system which detaches large numbers from independent modes of living, and makes them subject to the misfortunes and caprices of individuals. Such a mode of life may answer for one generation, but it will entail wretchedness upon the next.

By a proper simplification of business, all the details of housekeeping may be brought within the range of human powers. It is not necessary that the wife should become a slave, or that an enormous expense should be incurred for hired help, in order to exempt her from such a fate. Where machinery of any kind can be employed to facilitate the performance of domestic labor, it should most certainly be brought into requisition. But here things are much as they were fifty or a hundred years ago, although almost every branch of labor out of the house has been greatly expedited by me-

chanical inventions. Perhaps the nature of these duties is such as not to admit of an extensive application of artificial assistance ; but there is every reason to believe that an inventive genius would call in the aid of mechanics to cut off a portion of the labor now devolved upon females. In effect, this has been done already in one important particular—the manufacture of cloth. This was once wholly a branch of domestic industry, and its transfer to factories, only shows what is possible by way of reducing the aggregate of household toils.

There are some ladies who evidently fail to meet the demands upon their time, only because they lack the faculty of despatch. They toil ever, but make no progress. This unhappy trait is a constitutional infirmity, and requires pity rather than blame. Such are like those farmers who seem never to be able to keep up with the seasons ; their work is always crowding and always behind, not from its abundance, but solely from the manner in which it is conducted. Others, possessing a happier practical talent, will both do more and do it in season. For this evil there is, perhaps, no absolute remedy.

But something may be done to lessen materially, if not entirely remove, this vexatious slowness. Let it be remembered, then, that it is far easier to drive work than to be driven by work. Those who fall behind at all, have to work at a great disadvantage; it should therefore be set down as a fixed rule to be always slightly in advance, so as to secure whatever advantage there may be in a constant readiness for work. This will give the necessary self-confidence, and prevent the disagreeable and disqualifying hurriedness into which people fall who do not keep up with their business. This perpetual lagging is often occasioned by too closely following the old maxim, that what is once well done is twice done. It is true that work should be done well, and equally true that it can be done none the better for excessive painstaking. A faithful application of our powers is requisite, but nothing more. Thoroughness, carried beyond the point of propriety, loses its utility and degenerates into a mere waste of time. If ladies would have time for all their duties, they must save

time by a more equal distribution of their hours on the various objects of toil.

That is not a genuine love of order and excellence which prompts to disproportionate labor. It is well to be precise, but there is no precision in doing one thing to the neglect of another—in bestowing that time and pains on a single department, which are demanded by twenty others of equal importance. This world is not the place for indiscriminate effort. Ploughing is indispensable, as much so as planting and reaping; but if the farmer ploughs all the time, he can neither plant nor reap. Each employment should have its proper share of attention, and no more. It is on this principle that the judicious housewife disposes of her time so as to attain the greatest general good for her family, although she may not act quite up to her taste or wishes, in the prosecution of any one branch of labor.

If it is absurd to bestow labor disproportionately, even on objects of importance, how much more absurd, not to say criminal, is it where the object itself is of no consequence! And yet this kind of trifling, as I shall show in the

next section, is one of the chief hindrances of housekeeping.

SECTION V.

ABRIDGMENT OF LABOR.

THAT domestic labor might be reduced in several respects, not only without injury to the welfare of the family, but with positive advantage, is a palpable truth. Nor is anything wanting to demonstrate this fact, but suitable enterprise and courage on the part of those to whom the oversight of these matters is committed. In this their peculiar province, ladies can introduce whatever changes they please. I do not intend to say, that reform here will cost no effort ; where luxury has corrupted the habits of a people, it is not a small task to restore a salutary simplicity. Pampered appetites will not easily be denied, and she must be a heroine indeed, who can at once overcome all obstacles of the kind. But if the effort were general among the sex—if all women would

unite in an attempt to make a reasonable abridgment of domestic toils, there cannot be the slightest doubt of their success. It would be difficult to state every particular to which this reform might be extended. Dress, furniture, and cookery are evidently open to improvement. Fewer garments might be worn, and those too made, if it were necessary, in a less complicated and expensive manner. At present, little or no regard is paid to the time and labor spent in making garments, provided only that they are got up in the most approved fashion. The same is true of furniture. Neither the first cost, nor the durability, nor the utility of articles in this line is much regarded. Nor is the labor of cleaning and keeping in order suites of rooms and superfluous furniture often considered. The grand absorbing object which justifies all expense, and sets at nought all pains, is to appear in style. For this alone education may be scrimped, morals ruined, comfort banished, and healthy exercise converted into hopeless drudgery. But more than all others does the culinary department require to be curtailed. Its demands exceed all meas-

ure ; they scarce leave a shred of time for other duties. On this subject I must again refer to Dr. Alcott, whose observations are worthy of being written in letters of gold.

“I know there are many things which consume the time of a housekeeper besides mere cookery ; but I also know, that as things are, the latter comes in for a very large share of her efforts and strength. It is no light task to prepare hot water and make tea or coffee twice or three times a day ; to heat one’s self over the fire, the stove, or the oven, two or three times a day ; to prepare several hot dishes for every meal ; and to make ready the sauces, gravies, and other accompaniments for each meal. Nor is it a small matter to wash a host of plates, and platters, and tea-cups, and coffee-bowls, and tumblers, and knives, and forks, and spoons, three or four times a day.

“I verily believe it is the trimmings of our meals—the non-essentials rather than the essentials—that consume the great bulk of the time of our females. Cooking there must indeed be ; boiling, baking, stewing, roasting, &c. ;—but these processes need not be so conducted

as to absorb all our time. There is no more need of cooking everything new for each meal, than there is of washing clothes every day ; not a whit. Nor is there any necessity for having half a dozen *courses* of food at the same meal. One course is enough, and one cooked dish is enough—for prince or peasant—at one meal. The preparation of meat, and potatoes, and turnips, and pudding, and pie, and fruits, to succeed each other as so many different courses, with their accompaniments—pickles, sauces, gravies, &c.—to say nothing of any hot drinks to accompany them, is a species of tyranny imposed by fashion, to which no housekeeper ought ever to be compelled to submit. It may be difficult for her to oppose the current ; but it is for her life, and the life of her husband and children to do so.

“I tremble when I think how woman’s time—one of the most precious gifts of God—is frittered away in pampering the wants and administering to the pleasures of the mere physical nature of man. She must toil twelve, fifteen or eighteen hours a day in attending to his apartments, his clothes, his stomach, &c.,

and wear herself out in this way, and leave the marks of this wear and tear in the constitution of her children ; and to her daughters the same legacy which she received from *her* mother—the permission to wear herself out prematurely in the same manner. And the worst of all is—I repeat the sentiment—woman neither knows nor feels her degradation. Nay, she often glories in it. This is, in fact, the worst feature of slavery ; it obliterates the very relish of liberty, and makes the slave embrace her chains. Especially is this so with the slavery of our lusts, and passions, and propensities, and appetites. Woman not only toils on, the willing slave of an arbitrary fashion, that demands of her to surrender her whole nature—bodily, mental, and moral—to the dirt of plates, and pots, and kettles, but she is often proud of these employments, and seeks her reputation in them. She vainly seems to suppose that to prepare fashionable compounds in the most fashionable style, and to set an immense variety of her fashionable compounds on the same table, is to act up to the highest dignity of her nature. I do not mean that she ever asserts this, in so

many words ; but she does so in her actions—and actions, according to the old maxim, speak louder than words.”*

Now, whatever objection there may be to the extreme simplicity of the author's system of dietetics, there certainly can be none to that necessary reduction of labor for which he contends. If one third or one half of the labor now bestowed in superfluous cookery, could be redeemed for other and nobler employments, it would be an incalculable blessing. And if a similar saving could be effected in the other departments of housekeeping, woman might speedily be disenthralled. Her life is now a scene of suffering and oppression, because she is born to labors altogether too much for her strength. Let the demands upon her be proportioned to her actual ability, and she will have some chance of rising from the degradation of an over-worked condition.

We do not say in what, nor to what extent, this abridgment should take place, but we insist that it should take place somewhere, and to some extent—far enough at all hazards to

*The Young Housekeeper, pp. 315, 316.

obviate the difficulties in which our domestic economy is involved by its excessive demand for female labor.

SECTION VI.

HOUSEWIFERY AND COMMON SENSE.

It should be settled in the mind of every woman, that housewifery is under the control of common sense. The great evil of the present day is, that custom predominates to the exclusion of judgment. Females see and feel their enslaved condition, but for want of a full conviction of the impropriety of following the popular customs, they are unable to reform the department of housekeeping, and introduce those salutary improvements which the slightest acquaintance with the business shows to be necessary. This slavish subserviency to the *ton* is one of the greatest hindrances to human progress; it crushes both male and female—more especially the latter—and dooms them to drag on through life under embarrassments which a little independence could not fail to remove.

That a thing is common, is no sufficient reason for its continuance, if it is at war with our best interests. No one thinks of making the commonness of vice a plea for the practice of vice; such an argument—if argument it might be called—would justly be considered devoid of all force. And yet, most of the wretchedly annoying customs of domestic life have no other foundation—they have drifted in upon us, because, in such matters, one must blindly follow another. This universal obsequiousness—this passive, unreflecting submission, has cost many a woman her life, and spread desolation through many a household where nothing was wanting to life or happiness, but a suitable degree of attention to the dictates of common-sense. Woman, as a rational being, is bound to exercise perpetual vigilance against all such encroachments upon her rights; she cannot innocently shut her eyes, and permit these infringements to go on, as though the labor of correction were devolved on some one else. It is for her to announce what is practicable, and what is not practicable, in her peculiar department. And nothing but a foolish

renunciation of her own essential independence as a moral agent, can ever make her the victim of prescription. She may indeed be deceived, or be off her guard for a time, but it is the prerogative of reason to detect as well as to rectify error; and in this, as in a thousand other things, her reason must be her protection.

Doubtless the other sex have much to do by way of co-operation, in making improvements even in household affairs. As woman is but a joint proprietor and manager of the house, she cannot be expected to control its arrangements exclusively, though she must of necessity be the chief agent. Men, in spite of the prejudice against their meddling with such matters, should have far more to do with household regulations, and women should not deem advice and co-operation from this source an unwarrantable intrusion upon their rights. No sensible woman could deem it an offence for her husband to make suggestions touching domestic regulations, if at the same time, her own right to advise in his affairs, were—as it always should be—fully admitted. The united judg-

ment of both heads of the family will often be necessary in other things, and why not in perfecting that which, in the main, must be left to the supervision of one alone? Any little jealousy here is indicative of weakness rather than a just sense of what belongs to individual character.

I do not wish to insinuate that women never apply their intellectual faculties to household duties, for the reverse is true. They are full of ingenious expedients, but in the wrong direction; they aim with great dexterity to comply with the arbitrary and unreasonable demands of custom, when, instead of such compliance, they ought to devote all their powers to uproot the custom itself. Resistance, rather than laborious conformity, is required of them. Every woman may not have the sagacity to devise improvements, but every woman has the power of resistance, and should use it whenever her health or happiness is assailed by the tyranny of popular usage. It would be much better to summon her faculties to the work of reform, than to wear out life a willing or unwilling slave to social wrongs.

What we object to is, that women should feel the slightest obligation to prosecute their toils without assuming to judge for themselves as to the necessity or propriety of what they do. We would not have them enter upon their tasks as if compelled by destiny. The rules of housekeeping are not to be regarded as changeless. There should be a constant application of reason to the duties of the household. Nor is there any other means of progress. In this respect one thing is as another—the simplest rules of housekeeping, as the profoundest depths of science, or the most weighty affairs of state. Man has no method of improvement but that of applying his mental powers to the objects around him. The progress of the arts and sciences has been effected in this manner, and the continuance of this progress depends entirely upon these intellectual efforts. If there has been little or no advancement in the art of housekeeping, it is because the female mind has been otherwise occupied. Had women bestowed profound thought on the matters of daily toil—had they brought inventive genius, and philosophic observation, and vigorous enter-

prise to these things—domestic affairs would have kept pace with other improvements. But their course has been like that of the slave who delves from year to year, and from generation to generation, without ever improving the facilities for labor, or profiting by the results of experience. This unintellectual industry never advances the condition of society. There must be thought—vigorous, persevering thought, on all the complicated details of housewifery, or the business will remain as it is—burdensome and destructive to the physical energies of those who engage in it. Surely we need not perpetuate an evil of this kind. All other departments of human labor are beginning to yield to human skill, and females have only to employ the faculties which God has given them, to effect every necessary improvement in their particular sphere.

SECTION VII.

NEATNESS.

Few things are more essential to a house-keeper than thorough cleanliness. This is so

well understood and so common, indeed, among all who value their reputation for domestic management, that I scarcely need refer to the subject at all. But however common it may be, there are still some painful exceptions; and no work professing to give even a cursory view of the principles of housekeeping, should omit so important a topic.

Sluttishness, wherever it prevails, is an effectual blight upon all enjoyment. No matter how costly the dwelling, or the furniture, or the apparel, or the cookery, if it must be accompanied by the loathsome sensation of filth. We have shown that home is a place of sacred delights, and it will ever be regarded as such by all who have known what it is to have a home.

Nothing should be suffered to impair its sanctity; especially nothing so easily avoided as carelessness and dirt. Negligence here is the ruin of garnered stores. All want of tidiness is an approach to a dissolution of the family compact—not, perhaps, directly, but indirectly, inasmuch as it destroys the mutual respect on which the compact is based. There

is, moreover, a violation of positive obligation on the part of her who is thus guilty, since she fails to render her household comfortable. The means of their comfort are placed in her hands, and by worse than wasting them, she defeats the purpose of industry, and makes home undesirable. It is not probable that careless housekeepers are aware of these sad consequences; they are generally a well-meaning class of females, and sin more from ignorance than from evil intention. We shall notice some of the causes of a want of neatness.

1. The first, and probably the most difficult to be overcome, is that of improper education. A young lady brought up in habits of negligence, is very likely to retain those habits through life; she has no standard of correct management fixed in her mind, and consequently cannot judge of her own conduct in this particular. One who has been trained to neatness can readily detect every departure, because she is familiar with the true method of performing such things. But it is quite within the power of any woman, by the help of a little observation, and a little firmness, to

amend her domestic education in this respect, and become an ornament instead of a reproach to her house.

2. The next cause is that excessive exertion, or overtasking of the physical powers, which is characteristic of many women. They apply themselves with such eagerness and imprudence as to break down their health, and compel a withdrawal from even ordinary duties. Better care of their health and a more judicious bestowment of their strength, would have enabled them to reach the point of propriety, which is now far in advance of their enfeebled energies. She who insists upon doing everything, will soon find herself incapable of doing anything.

3. Devotion to what may be considered business—something aside from household affairs—is another fruitful source of neglect. Women, as well as men, too often become absorbed in pursuits of gain; and their earnings in one direction have the effect to ruin their reputation in another; hence we find the good housekeeper merged in the successful mechanic, painter, musician, florist, or teacher. These

cases may be comparatively rare, but who has not seen them?

4. With some there seems to be a total misapprehension of the real importance of neatness and good order to the domestic establishment. They look upon such a condition of things as desirable rather than necessary. Now it is not too much to say of these, that they are deficient in the first principles of house-keeping. Industry and integrity they may have, but they can have no just conception of what constitutes the excellence and beauty of home. All advice will be lost upon such, we fear; they do not think deeply; at least, they do not think in the right direction, and it is scarcely possible to apprize them of their error. In order to improvement, there must be either implicit submission to the dictates of a master, or careful observation and comparison on our own part, and of our own accord. This process of self-correction is not congenial with the present style of female education, and however practicable it may be, it is seldom put in requisition.

5. Another cause of the evil in question, is

a disgust for domestic employments. Most females have come to regard the details of housewifery as unworthy of their attention, and it is not wonderful that many pass over in a superficial and careless manner, what all deem as rightfully beneath their notice. We have already conceded that reform is necessary—that the prevailing domestic economy is both onerous and absurd—but this, though a good reason for improving the system, is no reason for suffering it still further to deteriorate.

6. The last thing which I shall name in this connection, is a false estimate of neatness considered as a trait of female character. Whatever other virtues and excellencies a woman may have, she can never command much respect while justly chargeable with deficiency in point of cleanliness. It will be apparent to all that she lacks one essential qualification for domestic happiness. The home that is committed to her care will not have the attractions which belong to that sacred spot. No man can wish to unite his destiny with a woman whose habits might render his abode unin-

viting, and thus prove a constant annoyance to his sense of propriety. We admit that this, as well as other faults, may be overcome; but no prudent man would choose to hazard his peace by incurring the necessity for such a correction, when a companion might be found whose habits were unexceptionable. Ladies should remember that all subsequent improvement is doubtful, and if they wish to make a favorable impression on the other sex, they must possess not only a capacity for excellence, but excellence itself.

SECTION VIII.

CARE OF HEALTH.

ALTHOUGH I have insisted upon neatness as a prominent trait of female character, yet I must not be understood to justify those extreme efforts which ladies sometimes put forth to reach this excellence. It is better, if need be, to incur censure for untidiness, than to be guilty of suicide through over-exertion. All

conventional, and even all natural requirements have their limit—and that limit is the strength of the individual on whom they are laid. Self-preservation, it is said, is the first law of nature, and no woman can, in justice either to herself or others, push the virtue of neatness so far as to infract this law. She ought to possess this virtue, and may, to the fullest extent; but then, it must often be in principle only. She may be restrained in the practice of this as of other virtues. The spirit may be willing when the flesh is weak. Judgment must govern the application of her powers, and opportunity must concur with the disposition for correct practice.

It is to be feared, however, that the occasion of this over-exertion, so ruinous to health, is too often of a frivolous character. Health is sacrificed to fastidiousness, rather than to the demands of decency. The strength bestowed on matters of taste merely, or what is of no importance beyond the gratification of a vain ambition, should be regarded as every way an unjustifiable outlay, save in those cases where it can be done without prejudice to health.

No human being is at liberty to trifle with the gift of existence, or to put life in peril, except in the performance of duty.

Ample time must be allowed for bodily rest, as well as for mental improvement. To forego this, is deliberately to trample on the laws of our being, inasmuch as neither physical nor intellectual vigor can be maintained under a slavish and uninterrupted devotion to manual labor. It is not enough that rest is desired, and would be thankfully enjoyed—a very different frame of mind is required to meet this contingency—there must be a feeling of absolute resistance. Let it be understood that improper demands, however urgent in themselves, or clamorously put forth, will be instantly and uncompromisingly rejected—and further, let it be known, that no attempt will be made to do all that might be done, or that might seem desirable to be done. Those who aim to do everything, are in a fair way to do nothing; their dogged efforts only induce premature prostration, thus defeating not merely what they sought to do, but what they might have done had their powers been wisely directed.

Why should women, any more than men, resolve to do everything? Among men labor is regulated by the ability of the laborer, and not at all by the demand for his services. There may be a thousand things which require attention, and either of them may be sufficient to occupy fully the powers of a man, but such a contingency rarely, if ever, calls forth the suicidal purpose of measuring strength with these accumulated tasks. Women should learn to acquiesce in what is so plainly beyond their control. Fretfulness and impatience, if they take the form of excessive industry, may lead to immolation by early subverting the constitution; but that they can ever, of themselves, be attended with any better result, or contribute in any measure to lessen the number of domestic duties, it would be folly to suppose. Science, at the bidding of moral principle, must devise means for reducing the unwieldy burden of labor now thrown upon females. It would be impossible for men, or even for animals, to do what is now easily done by means of machinery propelled either by steam or water. And we see not but

women must wait for many things to be done, till the means of doing them shall be increased.

There is still another instance in which restraint is needed—it is when the love of industry prompts to undue exertion. Many ladies are imprudent, not from any real necessity, but from indulgence in labor, because, through the influence of habit, labor has become agreeable to them. Such contrive to fill up every moment with something that may be called work—no matter how trifling, if it only serves to keep them employed. This perpetual drilling, though it may be pleasant to the economic feelings of the individual, must inevitably wear upon the constitution, and occasion premature decay. But even if all must be done that is finally done by those who are thus constantly plodding, it is questionable whether some little intermission would not facilitate the task. Suitable rest and relaxation are necessary to keep up the elasticity of the system, and prevent that slowness which is peculiar to a jaded condition of the animal powers.

Ladies should remember that the bare performance of so much manual labor is not their

only duty. The obligation to labor is at all times modified by collateral obligations of equal authority and importance. I do not regard the temptations to this fault by any means as numerous as to some other faults, but still no careful observer can have failed to notice repeated instances in which life, or health, or both have been sacrificed to inordinate industry. Women have not such vigor as will enable them to delve on, regardless of consequences; labor they may, and should, but they are too frail—as are all of human kind—to endure indiscriminate and uninterrupted toil.

SECTION IX.

LABOR PROMOTIVE OF HEALTH.

LET it not be imagined, however, that we wish to dissuade from labor as a whole.

Far from it indeed—so far that notwithstanding what is said here, we will repeat the thousand times told truth, that labor is conducive to health. But then it must be such

labor, and in such measure, as is consistent with the physical system. Industry—even hard work—is one of the best promoters of health, when not carried to excess. We might say more—it is an indispensable want of both our material and mental natures. To the former it gives such vigor as should inspire cheerfulness in the performance of duty, and to the latter such a consciousness of usefulness as greatly enhances self-respect. To the weaker sex, as well as to the stronger, labor is a merciful provision. It not only prevents the innumerable evils which flow from idleness, or from perverted activity, but ennobles human nature by making it instrumental of good. The industrious are producers—they multiply the gifts of God, and thus, instead of burdening the world with their support, and hanging as dead weights upon society, they become efficient contributors to the general welfare. We have no sympathy for those who look upon labor with displacency, but we would guard against an abuse of what all right-minded persons deem honorable, and what, whether hon-

orable or not, the great majority are compelled to practice.

It is not work that injures, but uninterrupted work—it is not hard work that injures, but too hard work. There is good reason for believing that many ladies would be more healthy if they worked more. Their pernicious views of gentility exclude them from those kinds of labor which are most beneficial—such as the kitchen or the garden might afford—and hence they rarely have that vigorous exercise on which physical health is mainly dependent. In part, this repugnance to such employments is easily accounted for, and not entirely unjustifiable. There was a time—and that time has not wholly passed—when woman was considered as predestinated to the kitchen, and to nothing else. No wonder that she revolts at a train of duties so unreasonably contracted; they become disgusting by being made exclusive, and she chooses to assert her dignity by contemning the degrading servitude. The true remedy is, not a desertion of these duties, but such a reform of household affairs as shall re-

store to the occupation of woman the respect which it has lost.

By resorting to exercises of this kind, with due regard to the laws of health, the physical constitution of our females would readily improve. But it is quite possible that the highest degree of improvement would require a better system of exercise than is supplied by the ordinary labors of housekeeping. It may be that more time should be spent in the open air, and that more vigorous efforts should occasionally be put forth, in order to a full development of the bodily powers. This advantage, however, cannot be fully reached by processes of labor, under existing social regulations.

SECTION X.

ECONOMY.

Nothing tends more to the peace and prosperity of the household than judicious economy. Good management is a sort of natural wealth which is often more than equivalent to money. Without this, domestic affairs soon fall into

confusion, and such confusion as money alone, however abundant, can seldom remove. I need not say that the exercise of this economy is, in a great measure, devolved upon woman. Her position as the head of the domestic establishment necessarily subjects its pecuniary concerns to her direction. She may not acquire the money which is to be expended, but it has to be expended in conformity to her taste and wishes. If she fails to judge correctly in regard to such expenditures, the best interests of the family suffer; nor is there any remedy, except in the greater evil of passing her by as unworthy of being consulted, or as incapable of attending to matters that evidently belong to her department. No affectionate man would wish to do this; no sensible woman would render it necessary to be done.

But in order to prevent an evil which may easily arise, females should avoid, not only all extravagance, but all unnecessary outlays. The habit of spending every available dollar is a dangerous one, because it leaves the mind irritable, and too conscious of dependence. Those who indulge in this practice are

often clamorous for more, when more is not honestly within the reach of such as provide for them. Persuasion, still more difficult to be resisted than complaint, is not unfrequently employed to supply the want of money—a want that may truly be said “to grow by what it feeds upon.” How many fortunes have been ruined by these tender importunities? How many men of wealth have lived beyond their means, till the temptations which spring from financial embarrassment, have involved them in flagrant crime, and their families in the deepest disgrace and poverty?

Yet the number who have thus fallen from affluence to indigence, will bear no proportion to those who, by the same unhappy means, have been kept from rising. An anxiety to follow too expensive examples of living, has swallowed up the scanty substance of the poor, and made perpetual a poverty that might easily have been removed by a little self-denial. In this way many families are dragging on from year to year, suffering all the inconvenience and distress incident to penury, rather than contract their desires sufficiently to improve

their circumstances. With such, future competence is no offset to present gratification.

This general improvidence is mainly caused by that disordered state of things which in so many ways bears heavily upon our females. Our complicated and extravagant modes of living have increased domestic toils and expenses to such an extent, that both the physical system of women and the financial resources of men are too frequently inadequate to meet the demands of housekeeping. And to make the matter still worse, the peculiar condition of woman in the social system, renders her an easy prey to temptations of this kind—her delicacy, her subordination, her passiveness, and her dependence, all combine to unfit her for a vigorous resistance to the encroachments of fashionable life. She is not alone in fault, but she shares the guilt, and too often contributes to extend the wretched consequences of this perverted style of living. It is with her consent, and too often at her solicitation, that we waste in personal decoration, the means of comfortable subsistence.

"We sacrifice to dress, till household joys
And comfort cease. Dress drains our cellar dry
And keeps our larder lean; puts out our fires
And introduces hunger, frost and woe,
Where peace and hospitality might reign."*

But it is not in dress only that we encounter this prodigality of means. The age in which we live is remarkable for its manufactures, and for its abundance of everything calculated to foster voluptuousness. The snare is, therefore, continually spread for woman—an appeal is made to her taste, and to her love of refinement, which she cannot resist without fixed habits of economy. There is too much evidence that this facility for indulgence has not unfrequently been fatal to virtue as well as to domestic happiness.

"Now basket up the family of plagues,
That waste our vitals; peculation, sale
Of honor, perjury, corruption, frauds
By forgery, by subterfuge of law,
By tricks and lies as numerous and as keen
As the necessities their authors feel;
Then cast them, closely bundled, every brat
At the right door. Profusion is the sire.

* Task, B. 2.

Profusion unrestrained, with all that's base
In character, has littered all the land,
And bred, within the memory of no few,
A priesthood, such as Baal's was of old,
A people, such as never was till now.
It is a hungry vice:—it eats up all
That gives society its beauty, strength,
Convenience, and security, and use:
Makes men mere vermin, worthy to be trapped
And gibbeted, as fast as catchpole claws
Can seize their slippery prey. Unties the knot
Of union, and converts the sacred bond,
That holds mankind together, to a scourge.”*

When it is considered that any resistance to such unwarrantable expenditures must depend, to a great extent, upon the economical habits of woman, we cannot easily over-estimate the importance of such habits to her domestic character. If she is unwilling to practice self-denial, or if her judgment fails, and the means at her command are not well employed, the independence and happiness of the family are almost inevitably ruined. Were it not that a certain degree of elegance—and that too without regard to pecuniary circumstances—is deemed essential to respectability, and were it

* Ibid.

not that this false impression is apt to assume the specious form of virtuous emulation, there would be much less need of the caution here given.

SECTION XI.

CO-OPERATION.

THE oneness of the family is a consideration never to be overlooked. When both the civil law and religion have pronounced the parties to the matrimonial compact "one flesh;" and especially, when from this union children grow up to claim parental care, it would be worse than idle to dream of separate interests. Least of all should woman, whose circumstances are so changed by this new relation, think of asserting any improper individuality. I am not prepared to say that the law deals fairly by her in every case, for I think it does not, but she cannot find redress in standing aloof from that identity of interests with which her destiny has become so intimately connected. The pros-

perity of the family, and of every member of the family, is her prosperity. She is not a slave, toiling solely for their happiness, irrespective of her own. Yet how frequently do we hear it said by ladies who are not deficient in good sense, but who seem to cherish an undue individuality of feeling, that they are spending their time at a great sacrifice, and wearing themselves out for the promotion of objects foreign to their own best good. What if the other sex should adopt a similar view? What if the father of a family should deem his time or means mis-spent when devoted to his household? Surely no man or woman ought to regard such an object as among the inferior purposes of life. The time spent in taking care of the family should be considered as spent in one of the noblest duties ever devolved upon a human being.

Women have more to do directly with the family than men have, and they are consequently in danger of acquiring a dislike to claims which are so monotonous, and which press upon them often with much inconvenience. The perpetual routine of domestic

avocations, separated as it is for the most part from the excitements of public life, and from the stirring scenes incident to the employments of men, is but too well calculated to beget indifference, and to create ideas of essential inferiority. This disadvantage, coupled with the known estimate so generally, but mistakenly, placed upon such pursuits, may well account for the repinings to which we allude.

It is not strange that the mind of woman yearns for something higher than the equivocal occupations to which the customs of society have doomed her; and it is right that she should loathe the senseless driveling by which a great portion of her time is wasted; but the remedy for the evil must not consist in alienation from domestic duties, or in the partial isolation of herself from the family compact. If she is oppressed, let her insist upon removing the cause of the oppression—that is to say, if her domestic affairs are needlessly exacting, she should simplify and reduce them to the proper standard.

No house can be in its internal arrangements what every house should be, without the con-

currence of its female members. The wife and daughters have it in their power to subvert or to establish the peace of the family. Stubborn, uncomplying conduct, if persevered in, will break down the best policy and uproot the most devoted affection. Kindness and co-operation, on the other hand, will as effectually maintain good rules and strengthen the bonds of social relationship. Woman is not alone in the great task of providing for the household, nor in the still greater one of keeping it under salutary discipline; and hence she ought to estimate carefully the rights of others as well as of herself.

The husband may aim high, and pursue his aims with untiring energy, but if the wife proves a hindrance instead of a help to him, his efforts will be in vain. Men can labor with diligence and garner in abundance the fruits of industry, yet that higher point—that reciprocal aid, without which there is an incompleteness in everything pertaining to social life—they cannot reach, because Providence has made it woman's privilege to bless the world with this species of assistance. If she

does not act her part, the loss is irreparable, for man cannot perform the duties of any nature but his own; he is, therefore, "alone"—in that state which the Creator at first pronounced "not good," and the evils of which the creation of woman was intended to remove.

CHAPTER VII.

Civil Education.

As a member of civil society woman has indefeasible rights. The measure of these rights cannot be determined by prescription. It is, however, subject to limitation. 1. By the authority of Scripture, either expressed or implied. 2. By the circumstances of the case.

The Scriptures have subjected woman to the authority of a husband, but this is all. Her obligation to the state is the same as his. Civil law is made by man, and if woman is excluded from all participation in making it, or from any of the advantages which arise from it, such exclusion rests upon merely human authority. But the law which subjects a wife to the control of her husband, was made by God, and is beyond the reach of human modification or amendment. Hence the political

rights of woman are not abridged by Scripture, unless it be indirectly. Her subjection to the authority of a husband might, under certain circumstances, be equivalent to a limitation of these rights.

Undoubtedly the strongest objection to the full participation of woman in the affairs of civil government, arises from her physical condition. She is too frail and too delicate for such a service. Her morals, also, would be too much exposed by that indiscriminate mingling with the other sex, which would be necessary in carrying out many of the arrangements of civil law. There seems to be no occasion for devolving upon her a train of duties to which her physical constitution is obviously undapted.

This exemption appears still more reasonable, when we consider the nature of civil government. It is nothing that pertains to the perfection of human character, but simply a convenience for the better regulation of society. There is no more reason why woman should be burdened with this task, than there is why she should delve in the mine or the field. Man is

able to afford her protection without this tax upon her powers.

But that she might properly have more to do with civil affairs than is now entrusted to her, we readily admit. It would not be extravagant to allow her the right to vote, and to hold such offices, and to perform such other political duties as are manifestly consistent with the delicacy of her nature, and the sanctity of her character. So far as regards the elective franchise, we are not alone in this conclusion, as will be seen by the following: "I would even presume to suggest, not the opinion, but the query, that as society is composed of the blended traits of both sexes, in which the stern energies of the one are softened and saved from barbarism by the softer virtues of the other, so might not our government be refined and civilized from much of its present ferocity, if the gentler half of the world possessed their share of right, to select their public as well as domestic lords? Our governmental spirit is too masculine; the representative too nearly of what society would be without the softening spirit of womanhood. And I venture to hint

the query, whether the certainty of woman's presence would not soon transform the rabble disorder of our political election rooms, to the chaste propriety of a Lyceum, or a Church. I question, whether the mobocracy would rule in its present unwashed supremacy; whether the whisky cellars would vomit up their florid-faced democracy to come, vote and conquer; and whether those great cruel abominations, which rear their fierce faces, in opposition to all the impulses of humanity, would long stand with *her* permission, the sympathies of whose heart are so often, and especially upon such subjects, far wiser than the hardened calculations of man's head. At any rate, I trust I may have awakened in your minds, the most serious question, whether it is not the worse part of our nature which is best represented in our government."*

Let no one think this is too great an assumption in favor of woman, for it is much less than has been accorded to her in many instances, and with entire safety. A woman now sits upon the throne of the most enlight-

* Dr. Whedon, Phi Beta Kappa Oration, 1850.

ened and powerful empire on the globe. And if Victoria may be the civil head of the British nation, there cannot be much temerity in conceding to others of her sex the limited political rights which we have mentioned. The contrast between supreme power and total incapacity for civil office—nay, even for casting a vote—is so great that people seem scarcely able to draw the inference that ought to be drawn from conditions thus widely varied. It is of no consequence that the queen of England is of the royal line—she is queen by virtue of her humanity, and the same humanity have all the women of her realm. The difference is unjustifiable; there can be no reason why one should have all power, and others none. If one woman may be a queen, others may have at least a modicum of civil authority, without prejudice to them or to the state.

It must not be forgotten that history presents us with a long list of distinguished female sovereigns. Among these are some whose talents have rarely been equaled, and never surpassed. ELIZABETH established the wavering cause of protestantism in England; ISABELLA pledged

her jewels for the discovery of America ; and MARIA THERESA successfully defended Hungary when it was assailed by enemies more formidable than those which lately crushed the heroic Kossuth. And yet there are those who inquire, what has woman done ? Let history answer. The record of her deeds is no obscure page in the chronicle of the world's doings, and it shows conclusively that wherever she has had the privilege of acting a part in civil affairs, she has acquitted herself quite as well as the other sex.

Had females more to do with the fabrication of laws, they would be very likely to guard their own interests somewhat better than they are now guarded. Our chivalry does not quite answer as a substitute for their self-interest. There are conditions in life in which the operation of the civil law bears very unequally upon them—the wife has nothing to bequeath, the widow but a fraction to retain, and the victim of seduction scarcely the semblance of justice at her command.

This total exclusion of women from civil affairs, is the effect of that general misapprehen-

sion which has so long excluded them from the sciences, and almost from the precincts of humanity. May we not hope that the subject of "women's rights" will at last meet with something more than a sneer? Will not man be just—nay, even generous towards his "better half?" We do not ask that the burden of government be thrown upon her, but that she be allowed such rights and immunities as are evidently compatible with her being. Let the consideration of her claims be no longer a theme for merriment. Let reason and justice, rather than blind custom, determine her civil relations and privileges.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ornamental Education.

WHAT many have made the most important part of female education, I am compelled to dismiss with great brevity. A few considerations will dispose of the subject.

1. This branch of female education is enormously and unreasonably expensive. The charge for music alone, in most cases, amounts to more than is paid for the entire course of classical and scientific studies. From eight to twelve dollars per quarter is the usual charge for tuition in this single accomplishment, while from five to seven dollars is the highest charge for instruction in all the substantial branches of education. The same is true, to a greater or less extent, of whatever belongs to the department of ornamental education. All is extra in price as well as quality. If such things

are to be taught, there is certainly no good reason for teaching them at this expensive rate.

2. But the disproportionate expense of such studies is not the only objection to them. They are of no real use. It is admitted that they serve a temporary purpose as embellishments, but it will hardly be contended that they contribute anything to the general welfare of the individual, or of society. Life has other objects which imperatively demand the time and powers of most women ; and objects too, for the accomplishment of which these superficial attainments are no adequate preparation. "We cannot but express a wish that ladies' preparatory schools could be established, in which the pupils might be fitted for the useful, as well as the ornamental parts of life, and where the fact of there being a kitchen as well as a drawing-room to every house would not be altogether lost sight of. If the world could be got through in a polka, to the accompaniment of a *cornet-à-piston*, the boarding-schools of the present day would be well enough ; but as there is a sort of everyday walk to be gone through, we should greatly appreciate any system of female

education that should fit woman to get through the world with us, instead of merely getting through our money."* Such, we doubt not, are the feelings of all who seriously reflect upon this subject. And yet we continue this senseless mode of education, and give it countenance in our schools, as though it was in some way befitting the character of woman.

3. Were there no other objection to these futile acquisitions, the fact that they trench largely upon the scanty time allowed females to prepare for active life, ought to bring them into discredit. Girls mature earlier than boys, and if the few years which they can at most devote to education, are to be broken in upon by such frivolous pursuits, but little can be done towards real culture. Accomplishments they may have, and if these were in any sense a compensation for the loss occasioned by this pernicious course, we should have less reason for regret.

4. But there is another and more formidable objection. The tendency of such studies is questionable. We do not say that it is decidedly

immoral, but it is at least injurious. If pride and other evil passions are not fostered, women are taught to rely for success in life, upon those traits of character which are most transient and most remote from virtue—upon beauty, and other personal graces, rather than usefulness and sterling integrity. Such accomplishments have very much the nature of dress, and similar expedients for arresting attention and securing admiration independently of essential excellence. It is well, too, if they do not stir up and give unnatural intensity to passions which have ever been difficult to control. Sexual desire needs to be repressed. Nothing can be deemed innocent that has a tendency to awaken prematurely, or to stimulate in any degree this element of our nature. No hot-house planting should bring forth feelings and thoughts which are always dangerous at best, and certainly ruinous when not under due restraint, or when developed to excess. The natural attractions of female beauty are quite enough without these artificial aids.

“Th’ adorning thee with so much art
Is but a barbarous skill:

"Tis like the pois'ning of a dart
Too apt before to kill."

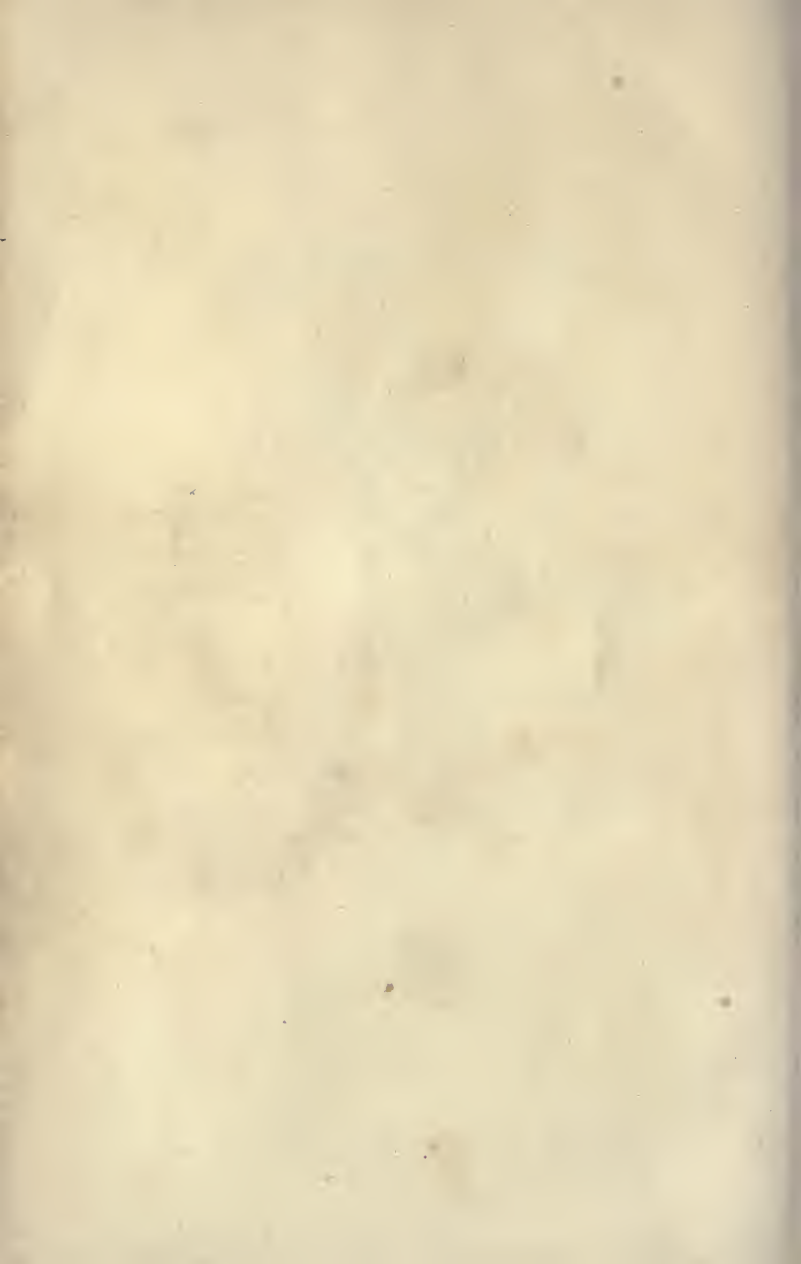
5. Again, this kind of education misleads both the female and her admirers, as to the true elements of character. If the object be to awaken interest and make an impression, the course of instruction must include those sciences which are calculated to improve the mind and the morals. This will give permanent beauty, and awaken an interest among sensible men. This will fit them for usefulness, and for intelligent companionship; it will fit them for wives and mothers here, and for the joys of heaven hereafter.

6. Thus, while we condemn all meretricious ornament as worse than useless for females, we would not have them unmindful of those real attractions which the God of nature has given them, and which the art of education, rightly understood, is so well adapted to promote. They may adorn themselves with all the virtues, and all the sciences, but not with the frippery of fashion, or of the arts. The wisdom of the Creator in giving elegance to the form of woman and softness to her manners,

should not be disregarded; her education should be at an equal distance from Amazonian accomplishments on the one hand, and from Paphian on the other.

THE END.







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